M.Mchedlov

Religion in the WORLD TODAY

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Translated from the Russian by *Natalia Belskaya* and *Felix Kholmogortsev*
Designed by *Vadim Kuleshov*

М. Мчедлов

Религия и современность

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INTRODUCTION

As recently as a few decades ago, many Marxists believed that, due to increased scientific knowledge and social progress, such specific phenomena and institutions as religion and religious organizations would vanish as meaningful ideological factors in national social life and world politics. Being primordial in nature, they were thought to be coming to the end of their short terms of existence in some remote regions of the world or in the minds of the older generation. This understanding is correct in principle, but in principle only, since it reflects, or rather anticipates, an objective and historically inevitable trend.

Present-day realities tend to modify this kind of precipitous conclusion, primarily, it concerns the historical duration and extent of the functioning of religion, the intensity of its current activity and its impact on the socio-political situation in different countries, as well as on international affairs.

The increasing activity of religious institutions and organizations, together with the general weakening of the positions of religion, can be observed by all, scientists and laymen alike. Religious organizations can often be seen trying to help solve a number of crucial problems. This is observed in many areas of the world, in countries with different socio-political systems, historic traditions, cultures and religions—Islam, Judaism, Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, etc. and embraces virtually all spheres of social and personal life, problems of war and peace, peaceful coexistence of states with different social structures and moral standards, the anti-imperialist struggle, socio-political principles, everyday life, personal conscience,

individual responsibilities, scientific knowledge, etc. The activities of religious organizations (especially those influencing tens of millions, which possess powerful and diverse propaganda departments and have age-long vast experience in the ideological indoctrination of the broad masses) cannot be overlooked by sociologists and politicians.

These issues are not of purely academic interest. Entangled together here are several problems, each one of acute interest to any meaningfully comprehensive socio-political theory, to any society. Naturally, they are of interest to the Marxist-Leninist theory in its comprehensive analysis of the objective trends and laws of development of consciousness and society, and to socialist society, which is based on scientific principles of organization and offers a dialectical materialistic and communist education to the broad masses.

On the other hand, religious literature and propaganda and some bourgeois secular ideological schools paint an exaggerated picture and misinterpret modern realities in their writings about a "religious boom", "rebirth of Islam", "significantly greater role" of Catholicism in modern politics, "consolidation" of religion under socialism, religion as the "eternal banner" of salvation and progress, etc. All these versions are used to substantiate the thesis of the inviolability of religion's salvation potential, of man's irrepressible need for religion at all times, in all regions and in all societies. Moreover, they say, an especially urgent need for religion exists in this modern age of rapid progress in science and technology, urbanization, confrontation between two socio-political systems, spreading mass liberation movements, threat of war with weapons of mass destruction, etc. In short, their logic boils down to the following: modern man is living through a period of remodeling his traditional principles, a faster pace of life, its certain rationalization and even standardization, the threat of tremendous devastation in modern warfare, worry concerning an environmental crisis, etc. In order to mitigate the effect of these and similar demoralizing and oppressing realities, man must be given some spiritual and moral compensation. And this is precisely what the "eternal" and "inviolable" spiritual values of religion are alle-

gedly called upon to do. As for the national liberation movements so common today and the diversified forms of social revolutions, religion is supposed to provide the only reasonable teaching that can inspire people to righteous acts.

The same ideas are used to prove the "fallaciousness" of Marxist views on the problem of religion. Since religion has been functioning, though differently, both under capitalism and socialism, and since it gives inspiration to some activists in progressive, even revolutionary, social and national liberation movements, then, it is alleged, the Marxist description of religion as a socially and ideologically conservative phenomenon, must be incorrect. A vast amount of literature has been published on the subject in non-socialist countries. Books by the Danish scholar Kaj Mógensen, who conducts research on the role of the Church in the modern world, offer one example. Proceeding from the correct assumption that religion is actively adapting itself to the rapidly changing living conditions in modern society, Mógensen attempts to substantiate an erroneous conclusion on the "eternal significance" of the Church for society. It is precisely his misrepresentation of reality in certain countries, that serves as the basis of his doubts concerning Marxist ideas on the essence of religion and on the reasons for its existence.

Thus, we have outlined briefly the contours of the actual problem that requires scientific analysis by Marxists-Leninists. The numerous attempts by secular and religious authors in Western countries to find nonscientific and even anti-Marxist solutions of the problem make it all the more urgent to find dialectical and materialistic explanation of the reasons for religion's growing activity (against the general background of its weakening position) in the world today and to explain why religious slogans are being advanced by numerous personalities involved in the liberation and revolutionary movements.

Furthermore, while it is important to interpret the above-mentioned objective phenomena, thus revealing the true position and role of religion in the modern world, other issues are involved as well, specifically, how the clergy reacts to the modern world characterized by the rapid development of science and technology, availability of education, freedom of

thought, exposure to materialistic and secular ideas, mass shift to the left, growing labor and national liberation movements, formation of dozens of young states in place of colonies and semi-colonies, consolidation of world socialism, etc. The modern epoch, that of the transition to socialism and communism on a world-wide basis, paralleled by the advancement of the scientific and technological revolution, is bound to affect the consciousness and behavior of the worshiper, the content of religious systems and the politics and ideology of religious organizations. It is clear that any religious system is certain to be modified or modernized in certain aspects of its cult, dogmata, organization. It is hard to understand the altered policies and tactics of religious leaders, as well as the motivation, behavior and social activities of the worshiping community, without due consideration of the religious phenomenon and the current characteristics of the individual and communal religious mentality. Therefore, we are concerned both with the new objective situation of today and with a modernized—theological and common—religious consciousness and their interrelation.

And finally, the range of questions under consideration acquires even greater political and ideological urgency because of the negative, and often belligerent, attitude of many religious organization leaders to the major event of the 20th century that has changed the course of human history—the birth of socialist society in the Great October Socialist Revolution. People today are witnessing a steady consolidation of the positions of socialism, which continues to unfold its humane potentials in promoting the advancement of the working man and broad masses of population, thereby awakening the sympathy and aspirations of even greater popular masses. This is precisely the reason why the old world—international reaction—is using all means available, military and economic, political and ideological in an effort to check the triumphant advance of socialism, arouse mistrust and hostility toward its theory and practice.

An appreciable intensification of the ideological struggle has been observed lately. In the West, it does not mean just a contention of ideas. A wide range of means is being employed there aimed at weakening the socialist world. Imperialists and

their abettors are constantly campaigning against socialist countries, they smear and distort everything that is going on in these countries in their attempt to divert people from socialism. This method of sophisticated subversive ideological activity is employed in the religious sphere as well. Moreover, this sphere offers opportunities for disguising subversive activity behind a mask of benevolence, which is quite convenient for anti-socialist forces. Since the role of the state or society in solving certain delicate issues related to the personal conscience of each individual (such questions as freedom of conscience, attitude toward faith or lack of faith among citizens, problems of religion, Church and atheism) is an important measure of democratism and humanism, the opponents of the basic principles of socialist society (and this includes representatives among secular reactionaries in addition to right-wing activists of various Churches) are trying to focus their speculations on those very issues. Attempting to arouse aversion toward the collective arrangement of socialist society and to "scare away" from it (and from revolutionary liberation movements) greater masses of uninformed people, they claim that the socialist society suppresses worshipers, persecutes the clergy and administratively and legally prohibits any religious organization. Falsification of the Marxist-Leninist theory and actual policy concerning the religious question and atheistic education are carried out using religious services, popular press, movies, television and other mass media. One interesting example is worth mentioning here. The author had the opportunity to visit the show "The Church—Martyr in the Communist Countries" that was sponsored in Rome by the Center for the Study of Communism simultaneously with the XXI Vatican Council of the Catholic Church. Special methods were used to affect the psyche and senses of the visitors in order to implant anti-communist sentiments and views in their minds. Suffice it to say that the visitors were welcomed by funeral music, and all the exhibits were depicted, as it were, behind barbed wire. This kind of propaganda and psychedelic effects were enhanced by an arrangement of exhibits that served to falsify both history and modern times and to represent the adherents

of an atheistic world outlook as ruffians, barbarians, perverts, etc.

Regretfully, this kind of propaganda cannot be dismissed as having no effect on certain strata of the population. Moreover, the more backward, less educated and less informed about the actual state of world affairs and liberation movements the people are, the greater is their chance to be infected with fanatical hatred for atheists, Communists and socialism. Witness, for example, some phenomena in the countries of the Middle East, some European and other states.

While the political enemies of socialism feel the need to disperse, for political and ideological reasons, a smoke screen of deliberate misinformation, another factor is equally important. Some believers residing in nonsocialist countries and sharing socialist principles of civil life still retain a measure of apprehension with regard to atheism. They have a sincere desire to understand the true relationship between faith and communism and visualize clearly their possible destinies within a socialist society. The author had the chance to witness this attitude, in particular, at an international symposium (a meeting of Christians and Marxists) in the summer of 1979 in Saltsjöbaden near Stockholm, sponsored by the Vienna International Peace Institute of the Vienna University Center for the Study of Peace Problems, with the support of the Swedish Lutheran Church. Many participants at the meeting, representatives of various Christian (Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox) organizations in the Old and New World, were interested in fundamental social and political problems, specifically in their relation to materialist ideology, in particular, the problem of religious tolerance within the new society. Proceeding, as a rule, from the vulgarized notion of the Marxist approach to believers as "implacable reactionaries" bred by bourgeois propaganda, they could not explain the joint participation of atheists and believers in a revolutionary movement and the creation of a new society.

Thus, a vast array of objective conditions and subjective factors make it necessary to explain the role of religion in the world today, the growing activity of some of its organizations, true essence of the Marxist-Leninist approach to the religious

phenomenon, participation of believers in progressive movements, etc. It should be mentioned once again that since every religious organization is in a state of evolution, the content of religious propaganda is changing, the mentality and outlook of believers modified by scientific and technological progress and radical social transformations and the spectrum of creeds among those involved in mass liberation movements is becoming more diversified. Some of these movements have religious overtones, though their socio-political content may be progressive.

Within the limits of one study it is hardly possible to fully discuss all the problems mentioned above. The subject is vast, complex and requires several specific studies focussing on concrete problems and religious denominations, taking into account regional features, etc. This book is limited to the discussion of a few current trends and processes that the author considers most important today.

Chapter I

RELIGIOUS IDEOLOGY AND MODERN MASS MOVEMENTS

If we accept as correct the aphorism that history favors paradoxes and often generates them, one example would be the relationships between certain mass social movements and their associated ideological systems. True enough, progressive actions and movements are not necessarily accompanied and inspired by ideological conceptions that are as progressive. At the same time, reactionary social movements do not always apply openly reactionary ideological postulates.

Obviously, each such paradox has its reason. Linearity is alien to historical process; history is complex and multidimentional, its course is influenced by many objective and subjective factors. This fact still further emphasizes the necessity for a scientific and comprehensive analysis of mass movements, the specifics of the country, region and conditions in which they take place, their particular stage of development and their class content.

Today, such a scientific, objective approach is especially important for analysis in the sphere of mass consciousness, since imperialist circles continue to use different ideological means in an effort to block the spread of scientific ideas about the course of history and the advancement of real socialism. It is therefore extremely important in the struggle against the old, reactionary world to establish sound arguments for refuting the theories and concepts that are used to vindicate bourgeois relations, private ownership, competition and the entire capitalist way of life, and that obstruct a realistic understanding of the laws governing social development and curb the creative

potentials of the individual, working classes or nations.

Obviously, the confrontation of communist and bourgeois ideologies reflects class struggle, the struggle of the working class and of all working people for the abolition of the system of exploitation, for the social liberation of the individual and the unhampered development of all peoples. It also reflects the existence of two opposed social systems—socialist and capitalist. Antagonism between the opposed classes and systems makes their respective ideologies just as antagonistic and irreconcilable, since they reflect the basic interests of those classes.

This is why Communists consider it their historic duty and responsibility to enlighten the widest possible public about the true content of Marxist-Leninist ideology and the humane achievements of socialist society, its superiority, in principle, over the reactionary system of imperialism. There can be no illusions concerning a possible abatement of the determined struggle waged by imperialist ideologists against the theory and practice of communism, for this would mean ignoring the class contradictions existing in capitalist countries and dismissing the actual situation in the world where two socio-economic formations are engaged in a tug of war.

By restructuring all social relations on the basis of collectivism, which is integral to the new system, the new social formation demonstrates clearly its historic supremacy in all spheres of life, its potential to find more rational and humane solutions to the problems of the individual versus society, relations among peoples and nations, labor organization, government, broad public involvement in managing the affairs of the state and society and the solution of environmental and other key problems of human existence.

The construction of a new society is guided by the Marxist-Leninist ideology that has already proved its worth as a reliable compass in the field of scientific knowledge and revolutionary transformation of the world. Its tremendous impact on man is determined by the fact that it explains the very essence of social transformations through the 20th century, reveals the objective and subjective factors in contemporary development,

reflects and defends the vital interests of the working class and of all the working people, helps unfetter the capabilities, powers, and spiritual potentialities of man and promotes his all-round harmonic development. Making this ideology accessible to ever broader strata of the working people is a matter of great historic importance, which requires well-documented proof that the ideological systems opposing Marxism-Leninism are inadequate, both theoretically and socially.

The term "ideological struggle", which has become part of the present-day political vocabulary, primarily means an uncompromising battle between bourgeois and socialist economic, social, political, philosophic, legal, moral views and concepts. The demarcation line here is quite distinct, since the ideologies serving the basic interests of antagonistic classes and systems, as was noted above, are just as irreconcilable as the interests that bring them to life.

However, there are certain ideological conglomerates, organizations built around a certain world outlook, that are hard to identify with any particular political camp. Because of their complex structure, long existence and diverse membership representing a wide variety of political creeds, such organizations require more differentiated and specified criteria pertaining to categories of outlook as well. Eventually, they are sure to reveal their political content, which, however, tends to manifest itself indirectly, rather than directly. For instance, instead of advocating bourgeois relations and the capitalist way of life directly, they may seek to hinder an objective understanding of the laws governing social development, breed illusions and misconceptions and curb man's creative potentials. This is why they must be examined and studied.

The concepts discussed above may be explained in more detail through the analysis of the role and functions of a specific form of social consciousness such as religion, which is in one form or another involved in the contest of communist and bourgeois ideologies, sometimes serving as an ideological platform for certain progressive liberation movements.

Instances of Traditional Intermixing of Religion and Politics

Throughout history, mass social movements—class movements, broad democratic movements, especially national liberation movements—have been associated with religion in one way or another. The intensity and nature of their religious component have varied, but its presence in those movements has been far from incidental due to the very nature of both religion and social movements.

Religion is known as a mass form of social consciousness. In certain historic periods and in certain areas of the world, this form of consciousness is prevalent among the masses and sometimes completely dominates over other forms of social consciousness. Therefore, religion always implies significant masses of the population. Socio-political movements, in their turn, are unthinkable without the participation of certain social groups, classes, often the whole nation. Therefore they, too, are unavoidably linked to huge masses of the population.

Thus, it is readily seen that having essentially the same carriers and participants, religion and socio-political movements are bound to intermingle. Both history and modern times show that this has been and remains true. It is important, therefore, to approach this problem realistically and, when encountering religion in the framework of a socio-political movement, to refrain from both impatience and an underestimation of this phenomenon. Moreover, the true meaning of some socio-political movements in certain areas of the world cannot be understood without due regard for its religious content, which still attracts rather vast popular masses, though it is based on perverted, nonscientific conceptual premises.

The following circumstance must be taken into consideration here. The same religion, its dogmas and moral precepts can be and have been used by opposing forces. Thus, the cross of missionaries blessed the colonizers, while the national liberation movement in many countries of the so-called "third world" is being waged under religious banners. The motto "God is with

us" was struck on the belt buckles of fascist thugs, while both believers and cultists participated in the anti-fascist resistance movement; socialism and communism have more than once been anathematized by the clergy of different denominations, while frequent attempts are known to cast a religious form of socialism and represent it as the best practical realization of the ideas of Christianity, Islam, Buddhism...

Such seemingly paradoxical contradictions manifest themselves most clearly in traditionally Islamic regions. The anti-Shah and anti-imperialist revolution in Iran began under Islamic slogans, though soon there appeared significant differences among believers and the Moslem priesthood representing different class forces with regard to their views on further developments.

The enemies of the people's power and revolutionary gains in Afghanistan (for example, the notorious "Moslem Brothers" agents of international imperialism and other reactionary forces) are trying to use Islamic slogans, although most of the worker-believers are backing the policy of the revolutionary leadership and participating actively in the construction of a new life.

Such controversial phenomena are invariably explained by the fact that religion has a large cross-class foundation with its adherents belonging to opposing class forces. Radical elements of the population wielding a certain revolutionary-democratic potential address themselves to religion, which makes the problem of the role and place of religion in mass liberation movements even more acute. What is the actual function of religion in mass social movements? How can the current growing activity of religious organizations be explained? What is the political and ideological meaning of their activity? These questions and others like them are unavoidable.

Objective treatment of these questions makes it possible to establish the traditional aspects of the interrelation between religion and mass movements, and what is most important, what traits have been acquired by this interrelation at the current stage.

The effect of religion on politics, including mass social movements, is first of all seen in the fact that religion, as such, as a system of ideology, is an active factor in political life, principal-

ly, because of its influence on believers. This participation in political life starts from the very inception of the unscientific religious world outlook. The purely religious participation in politics makes itself invariably felt, since perverse outlooks prompt perverse values, method of action and behavior pattern, thereby preventing broad masses of worshipers from taking a scientifically correct approach in different spheres of personal and social life. It reflects on the worshiper's frame of mind, his psyche, aspirations, understanding of the world, social behavior, political actions. This is the ideological function of religion, and the function is the stronger, the greater the influence of religious illusions in any particular region of the world. This is why there will always be an ideological dispute between the adherents of secularization, free thought, rationalization, and science, on the one hand, and religion, on the other.

In their consistent, critical analysis of religion, adherents of the scientific world outlook, dialectical materialism, furthering and developing the age-old traditions of materialism, reveal religion's social function and its basic ideas, which, according to Lenin, are "generated by the brutish subjection of man both by external nature and by the class yoke—ideas which *consolidate* that subjection, *lull to sleep* the class struggle".[1]

The second source of linkage between religion and politics is determined by the purposeful effort and interests of the Church establishment, activists from religious organizations. In early stages of religion, they were represented by a rather small group of concerned individuals who were pursuing their established political line and coercing their congregations into doing the same. In many regions of the world today, however, predetermined political objectives are being pursued by ramified Church establishments and all kinds of religious and semi-religious parties and organizations, including children's, youth, women's, trade union and other associations. Every major religion or Church continues to make every possible use of such clerical systems of control over masses of worshipers and social

[1] V. I. Lenin, "To Maxim Gorky", *Collected Works,* Vol. 35, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, p. 128.

movements. It should be noted from the very start that the nature of this political impact may vary (a subject that will be discussed in more detail later). Much depends on the likes and dislikes of the particular Church activists or religious organizations, on the disposition and interests of the congregation and on the sociopolitical situation in the region or the world as a whole.

The social content and ways in which religious activists and institutions penetrate into the realm of politics and social movements were earlier analyzed by the founders of Marxism-Leninism. In one of his early works, "The Communism of the *Rheinischer Beobachter* ", Marx thoroughly expounded upon the essence of the social principles of Christianity that preached "...the necessity of a ruling and oppressed class". He criticized the use of religious doctrines and direct participation of religious activists in the area of politics.[1]

The ways of interference by the clergy in the socio-political sphere have been changing along with social progress, expanding secularization, spread of atheism, a public opinion shift to the left and intensification of the liberation struggle. These developments have also been analyzed by the founders of scientific communism. For example, analyzing the situation in Russia early in the 20th century in his work "Classes and Parties in Their Attitude to Religion and the Church", Lenin unmasked attempts to mislead people using ever more refined and sophisticated gimmicks.[2]

Let's consider yet another channel of using religion in the sphere of politics: the ways politicians themselves, primarily representatives of the ruling classes, use religion, its organizations, dogma, and moral precepts for their own selfish purposes and in order to reshape social movements to suit themselves. This trend, though traditional, has become of special importance today. All kinds of politicians are actively applying religion

[1] Karl Marx, "The Communism of the *Rheinischer Beobachter* ", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works,* Vol. 6, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, p. 231.

[2] See: V. I. Lenin, "Classes and Parties in Their Attitude to Religion and the Church", *Collected Works,* Vol. 15, 1977, p. 420.

in the sphere of both domestic and foreign policy.

After becoming the dominating class, the bourgeoisie has discarded its juvenile indulgence in free thought and adheres to the following motto in its social policy: "Religion must be preserved for the people". Moreover, the bourgeois class is beginning to call upon religion to help implement bourgeois principles in the field of politics, economy, morality and ideology. Engels stressed that "... the first and foremost of all moral means of action upon the masses is and remains—religion".[1]

Recently the purposeful utilization of religion by the bourgeoisie has been spreading into new spheres, including the sphere of state government. This political process, which is contrary to the ideas of free-thinking and democracy, can be studied in its concrete form using different states as an example. Consider European states, for example. Studying the nature of his contemporary England, Engels pointed out that "... state and church merge entirely with one another and are inseparable".[2] A similar situation was observed by Marx in Prussia. In his work "Comments on the Latest Prussian Censorship Instruction", he describes the process of "... *fanatical* introduction of religion into politics... to base the state... on faith".[3]

How religion is used by bourgeois politicians is vividly described in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. "The bourgeoisie ... has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the man of science, into its paid wage-labourers."[4]

Exploitation of religious sentiments and moods among believers participating in social movements in the interests of the bourgeois class continues to acquire new subtle forms as

[1] Frederick Engels, "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific", in: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, pp. 112-13.

[2] Frederick Engels, "The Condition of England. The English Constitution", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works,* Vol. 3, 1975, p. 501.

[3] Karl Marx, "Comments on the Latest Prussian Censorship Instruction", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works,* Vol. 1, 1975, p. 118.

[4] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works,* Vol. 6, p. 487.

time goes on. Thus leaders of the revolutionary liberation struggle must give consistent criticism of religion and work out suitable tactics with regard to the masses of believers. Principal ideas concerning this were advanced by V. I. Lenin. In his work "Socialism and Religion" Lenin stressed that "everywhere the reactionary bourgeoisie has concerned itself, and is now beginning to concern itself in Russia, with the fomenting of religious strife—in order thereby to divert the attention of the masses from the really important and fundamental economic and political problems, now being solved in practice by the all-Russian proletariat uniting in revolutionary struggle. This reactionary policy of splitting up the proletarian forces, which today manifests itself mainly in Black-Hundred pogroms, may tomorrow conceive some more subtle forms. We, at any rate, shall oppose it by calmly, consistently and patiently preaching proletarian solidarity and the scientific world-outlook—a preaching alien to any stirring up of secondary differences."[1]

And finally, the fourth instance of the religious factor being injected into politics occurs when believers participating in mass social movements, driven by circumstances, turn to religion for a justification of their efforts, often progressive historically, for an ideology that would express their interests, hopes and aspirations. Movements of this kind must be differentiated from others where religious ideas and slogans are imposed on the participants in order to blunt and neutralize the progressive, revolutionary content of mass movements. For this reason, concrete analysis of religious figures interfering in plainly temporal, socio-political affairs, especially social movements unfolding under a religious banner, indicates that the results and consequences may be different. The same ideological and organizational mechanism may be used to serve entirely different purposes, both politically progressive and regressive, both in the interests of the masses and against them. Everything depends on the political guidelines,

[1] V. I. Lenin, "Socialism and Religion", *Collected Works,* Vol. 10, 1978, p. 87.

social cross section of the movement followers and the concrete objectives sought by them and their leaders.

This concrete historical approach to the socio-political content, requirements and goals of movements developing under religious slogans is a longtime Marxist tradition.

Engels's analysis of the Peasant War in Germany offers an excellent example. Following a thorough discussion of the socio-political interests of various classes involved in the war in Germany, Engels provided this precise definition: "Although the class struggles of those days were clothed in religious shibboleths, and though the interests, requirements, and demands of the various classes were concealed behind a religious screen, this changed nothing at all and is easily explained by the conditions of the times".[1]

V. I. Lenin advanced similar ideas when analyzing the peculiarities of liberation movements in different historical epochs. His generalization that "...political protests in religious guise are common to all nations at a certain stage of their development, and not to Russia alone",[2] provides a methodological basis for the understanding of many liberation movements both in the past and present.

Projecting those traditions into modern times and conditions in the study of new, socially controversial movements, say in the Moslem world, and substantiating the Communists' stand with regard to social forces acting there, the 26th Congress of the CPSU stressed: "Of late, Islamic slogans are being actively promoted in some countries of the East. We Communists have every respect for the religious convictions of people professing Islam or any other religion. The main thing is what aims are pursued by the forces proclaiming various slogans. The banner of Islam may lead into struggle for liberation. This is borne out by history, including very recent history. But it also shows that reaction, too, manipulates with Islamic slogans to incite counter-revolutionary mutinies. Consequently, the whole thing

[1] Frederick Engels, "The Peasant War in Germany", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works,* Vol. 10, 1978, p. 412.

[2] V. I. Lenin, "A Draft Programme of Our Party", *Collected Works,* Vol. 4, 1977, p. 243.

hinges on the actual content of any movement."[1] This analysis of modern social processes and movements in the Islamic world from the standpoint of Marxist methodology helps provide an understanding of the true meaning of the policy pursued by certain circles, not only in this particular region and not only among Muslim organizations.

It is especially important to stress this today, since inside many religious organizations in different areas of the world a much more active attitude is being taken by leftist elements, which, similar to religious heresies historically progressive in their time or the more radical branches of Christian, Islamic and other religious socialism, use the same religious postulates and structures for entering into politics. However, they speak out against reaction, militarism, imperialism and thermonuclear threat and stand for peace, democracy, social progress. Therefore, when evaluating today's mass social movements that are being conducted under religious flags, it is important not to substitute political categories for ideological ones and not to ignore the disparity between the movement's religious ideological shell and the genuine interests of the believers determined by their socio-political situation.

Take Pakistan, for example. Socio-political and economic reforms carried out there in conformity with the principles of Islam by Zia ul-Haq since early 1979, in effect solidify the position of the bourgeois-landlord bloc in Pakistan, while Islam is likewise addressed by opposition circles in the country.

We have now discussed the main channels through which religion and policy interact, and which also serve as links between religion and mass social movements. These ties are permanent; they have existed throughout history, though their manifestation has varied. The following circumstances should be considered in any concrete analysis.

To start with, one must take into account the peculiarities of the epoch, democratic achievements, socio-political devel-

[1] *Documents and Resolutions. The 26th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union,* Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, 1981, pp. 18-19.

opment, the degree to which scientific thought has permeated life, the spread of civilization, subjective factor, i.e., how much the population is involved with religion, or conversely, how much the general public accepts religious indifference and freethinking.

Thus, in the Middle Ages, in West European countries, for example, where, according to Engels, the sentiments of the masses were nourished by religion, the role of the religious factor in political life and mass movements was significant. A different situation is observed in the same countries today. Engels himself noted in several articles ("Continental Socialism", "'Young Germany' in Switzerland") the irreligiousness of French and German proletarians,[1] as well as workers in other West European countries; their religiousness could only be superficial, while religious fanaticism of the medieval type, of course, could no longer be observed among them. Similar facts could be cited from the histories of other countries. Therefore, no serious analysis which seeks to establish the actual degree of penetration of political clericalism into mass social movements and existing possibilities for its neutralization can discard the subjective factor, which eventually is determined by the achievements of civilization, the peculiarities of the contemporary epoch.

Regional features should be carefully considered, too. Indeed, any comparative analysis can easily establish dissimilar situations existing in the same epoch, but in different regions and countries. Comparing, for example, the Afro-Asian states today with their prevailing Muslim population and Islamic ideas and traditions firmly implanted, and Western European countries pervaded by the ideas of the Enlightenment, secularization and free-thinking, one finds that the general social and ideological situation, and therefore the possibilities for clerical encroachments including the sphere of mass social movements, are of course, different.

Finally, the peculiarities of the religious system per se are also important in the study of the role of religion in social

[1] See: Frederick Engels, "Continental Socialism", " 'Young Germany' in Switzerland", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works,* Vol. 4, 1975, pp. 212-13, 651-53.

movements. To ignore them and adhere to only one approach to all faiths would make the analysis non-specific.

When analyzing the liberation struggle of the Greek people inside the Ottoman Empire in an article written in the middle of the last century ("The Greek Rebellion"), Marx made a few pointed observations quite important for the understanding of the peculiar nature of different clerical systems. Among other things, this article deals with the specifics of the contemporary clericalism of both Orthodox and Islamic denominations.

While discussing the situation in his contemporary world, Marx noted that the main line of division between Orthodoxy and other varieties of Christianity was that the Orthodox religion made no distinction between the State and the Church, between temporal and clerical life. In the Byzantine Empire the State and Church were tied in so close together that it was impossible to tell the history of one without telling the history of the other. A similar identity was observed in Russia, though, unlike the situation in Byzantium, the Church was reduced to a mere tool of the State, an instrument for justifying its domestic and foreign policy.

"In the Ottoman Empire," Marx pointed out, "in conformity with the Oriental notions of the Turks, the Byzantine theocracy has been allowed to develop itself to such a degree, that the parson of a parish is at the same time the judge, the mayor, the teacher, the executor of testaments, the assessor of taxes, the ubiquitous factotum of civil life, not the servant, but the master of all work." As a result "this all-embracing oppressive tutelage, control, and interference of the Church has been permitted to absorb the whole sphere of social existence."[1]

Today, too, depending on the character of certain religious denominations, clericalism becomes overtly or covertly militant, or relatively liberal. And indeed, wherever Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, Catholicism or several other denominations exist, there also exists the possibility for direct clerical intervention in socio-political movements. As scientific analysis shows, such factors are of no small importance in socio-political practice.

[1] Karl Marx, "The Greek Insurrection", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works,* Vol. 13, 1980, p. 72.

Thus, an active stand taken by the right-wing Moslem leaders in African, Middle East and Asian countries and their conservative public statements "...for a return to an Islamic society in accordance with the teachings of the Koran...", for a replacement of temporal governments by religious ones, rest upon religious traditions rather strong in these areas. Looking at the features of popular movements in Moslem countries, the American newspaper *New York Times* reported an apt comparison made by Western diplomats in those countries to the effect that there "attacking Islam is the equivalent in the United States of attacking motherhood or apple pie..."[1]

An objective approach to the evaluation of the role of religion in the world today presumes taking into account the following circumstances associated with the nature and specific features of religion.

In practice, the activities of church organizations transgress the specific religious area, that of tending to the so-called religious requirements of believers. In some way or another, most religions always claim to be universal law-makers in personal and public life, to have a say in the everyday life and political orientation of their followers, to possess the authority to approve or taboo the social actions and conduct of believers. This traditional claim can be traced in every basic religious denomination. Such, for instance, is the hallowing of estate and caste distinctions by Hinduism. Confucianism openly asserts the right of "nobility" to exploit "common" people, demanding unconditional reverence not only for parents, but for seniors by age and social standing. The domination of the clergy in Judaism and Islam is so universal that by numerous rulings and bans they can regulate legal relations, home life, meals, recreation, even the clothing of believers. Blatant intrusion of the Church into the personal and intimate lives of the worshipers (including such sensitive areas as abortion, use of contraceptives and so on) can be found in modern Catholicism.

Religion, however, does not limit itself to interfering in citizens' personal lives. Religious organizations, be they Islamic,

[1] *The New York Times,* 18 December 1983, pp. 1, 20.

Judaist, Christian or Buddhist, are actively seeking—wherever conditions offer such an opportunity—to interfere in the areas of public and state establishment. In Spain, for example, where a bourgeois democratic constitution was adopted after the defeat of Francoism in the late 70s, right-wing clericals continue to hope that the previous system will be restored in some form or other.

Thus, Archbishop of Toledo, Spain's Primus Cardinal Marcelo González Martín, sharply criticized the country's Constitution (already approved by the Spanish Parliament) when addressing Toledo's clergy in late November 1978. Declaring that the document opposed religion, impaired the foundations of the family and marriage and did not guarantee freedom of education, Marcelo González Martín called upon all conscientious Catholics to vote against the basic law during the referendum. Eight Spanish bishops vowed their support for the Archbishop.

Marcelo González Martín's position was denounced by Spanish democratic organizations, which considered such appeals as evidence of the fact that part of the episcopacy was still entertaining the ideas of Francoism and national Catholicism and dreaming of returning to the past.

Although there is not a church organization in any antagonistic society whose leaders would stay aloof from purely temporal, political issues, the share of religion's influence on purely secular affairs, its scope of involvement in issues over which religious leaders are trying to extend their control, depend, as was mentioned before, on the concrete historic situation, features of the given epoch and country, on the advance of civilization, range of social progress and success achieved by progressive, democratic forces in their struggle. In most cases, the latter demand banning or limiting the activities of the clergy inconsistent with religion, separation between the Church and the temporal issues, prohibition of the violation of the civil conscience of worshipers and disallowing of the use of people's religious sentiments for temporal and political purposes.

A few centuries ago, bourgeois enlighteners are known to have sharply criticized religion, especially the Church, which ideologically and politically defended feudalism. Yet, in Western

countries today, clericalism is again involved in political activity in all spheres of spiritual and social life, this time for the sake of conserving the bourgeois system. This reveals once more the crisis of bourgeois socio-political thought which time and again avoids any attempts to make a sober and reasonable assessment of social realities. With the further aggravation and intensification of contradictions in the imperialist system and the consolidation and advancement of the system of socialism, the ruling classes are increasing their reliance on clericalism in order to distort scientific socialism and its achievements and to hinder any further expansion of the ideas of communism. Therefore, modern clericalism in developed capitalist countries is modernized clericalism. Instead of the "classical" medieval clericalism which claimed the absolute supremacy (including political) of the clergy, currently witnessed in capitalist countries today is the reinforcement of existing bourgeois relations by means of religion and the Church, whose influence is being enhanced by the bourgeoisie itself.

This process began in the last century. It is interesting to look at the notes that Lenin made back at the beginning of the current century on the margins of the book *Kleine philosophische Schriften* by J. Dietzgen, an original proletarian thinker and Marxist philosopher. Lenin underlined Dietzgen's thought about the dependence of idealistic philosophy and religious world outlook on bourgeois reactionary policy. He noted Dietzgen's idea that religion and philosophy, formerly innocent delusions, had become refined instruments of political swindle now that the ruling classes were interested in reaction.[1]

The logic and mechanics of ideological structuring used by representatives of different churches and religious denominations to justify their interference in socio-political life have remained unchanged for decades. Socio-political life is declared to be dependent on some unalterable, "natural" moral standards of divine origin. Since clerical systems, in effect, dilute all socio-political problems in ethics and reduce them to an assemblage

[1] V. I. Lenin, *Complete Works,* Vol. 29, Moscow, 1964, p. 394 (in Russian).

of religious and ethical norms, the jurisdiction of this exaggerated system of social ethics extends over all socio-political phenomena. Therefore, the believer's attitude towards those phenomena, as well as his present and future moves, must be "encoded" and "programed" by his spiritual pastors.

This line of thought—to one extent or another—is characteristic of many religious denominations. Moreover, in principle, this mechanism for ideological backing of the secular social functioning of religion and the Church is favored by all religious leaders, no matter how wide the spectrum of their political preferences may be—from outright reactionary to the extreme left. It is, therefore, a matter of what method to choose in proving the necessity for religious interference in civil life, regardless of any political platforms.

Speaking of trends in modern clericalism, it is important to note that, amidst the current popularity of democratic and secularistic ideas, the interference of the Church in civil life cannot be carried out without a guise. It is precisely for this reason that churches so often disavow their interference in politics today. In his very first address (October 1978), Pontiff John Paul II stated: "We have no intention to resort to political interference or be concerned with temporal affairs. Just as the Church keeps away from categories of earthly nature, so will our approach to those burning problems of men and peoples be determined exclusively by religious and moral considerations".[1]

The papal address of August 25, 1980, to the United Nations Organization stated that the Church had no desire to have a say in matters of a purely economic or technological character, nor did it claim to seek to resolve complicated concrete problems for which it had no competence. But the Church considers it its invariable duty to voice its opinion on all questions relating to man's existence. But everything in human society is eventually tied in with man's existence and activity, so this seemingly liberal position may have a broad interpretation. Consequently, any clerical activity is declared as appropriate;

[1] *L'Osservatore Romano,* 18 October 1978.

in reality, however, it depends on the actual situation in any given country, correlation of forces, influence of democratic and secular circles, etc.

The line of reasoning cited above is typical of other religious schools, which seek to justify the meddling of the Church in politics, economy, international relations, ideology and public life as a whole. Behind the righteous mission of preserving the norms of religion and morality, clerical concepts promulgate an unequivocal political line, promote the views of certain social groups, impose their attitude toward the existing public institutions and movements and assume the role of the only reliable landmark on the path of mankind, presumably acceptable for all classes of society.

Noteworthy in this regard is the Vatican's recent vigorous advocacy of the concept of a "new Europe" that reigns supreme over states and is united by common Christian principles rather than by economic or political interests. This concept was contained in the address of Pope John Paul II to the Polish bishops in Czestochowa during the Pontiff's visit to Poland in the summer of 1979. The utopian ethical and sociological projections in this concept ignore actual class relations, proceeding from the premise that all social phenomena and processes must rely on principles that are legitimized and guaranteed by the Church.

Taking into account the ecclesiastic rhetoric coming from all the churches operating in capitalist countries, it becomes obvious that the Church defends fundamental bourgeois relations and existing social establishments and arrangements through the use of religion and church institutions, whose influence is promoted by the efforts of the ruling classes themselves. It is not a coincidence that clericalism is often championed by politicians who look to religion for the support of their anti-popular policies, and who receive that support in some form or another.

In their quest for ways to rehabilitate the capitalist system and enhance the effectiveness of their struggle against communism, political leaders in capitalist countries continuously reiterate in their public statements such words as "religion", "God", "salvation of faith", trying to present the key class and

social contradictions in the world today as a contest between communism and religion, faith and atheism, morality and amorality. During his term of presidency in the USA, Eisenhower considered the struggle of freedom against slavery and religion against atheism as a fundamental issue in modern times. Other stalwarts of modern imperialism, such as Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, Adenauer, Strauss, and Hoover, acted in the same spirit, trying to camouflage the true meaning of their reactionary activities with abstract phraseology.

The practices of US Administrations over many years offer convincing evidence of such policies. All their actions aimed at intensifying the arms race, thwarting the cause of international detente, whipping up anti-Soviet and anti-communist hysteria and suppressing national liberation movements, have always been pharisaically covered up with religious piety. Take, for example, President Carter's address to the representatives of the university faculties for the study of Islam in the District of Columbia in February 1980. It was an inspirational talk about respect and reverence for Islam and for all the worshipers of Islam, about the desire to establish the closest possible political, economic and cultural ties with Muslim countries and with Muslims everywhere in the world. Meanwhile, there is documented evidence that, at the same time, subversive acts were being committed against Iran and against the so-called Islamic revolution in the country.

The current US Administration is even more straightforward and unscrupulous with regard to the use of religion for the justification of its policies. According to Reagan, it is necessary to deploy means of mass destruction, including those in space, intensify international tension, anti-Soviet and anti-communist hysteria and curb the revolutionary potentials of mass movements in order to oppose communism and the Soviet Union, which is referred to as the focus of evil, and to protect religious and humane values from the "vicious and godless Communists". Reagan's political rhetoric, launched in support of his anti-communist crusade, is invariably dotted with such terms as "godless tyranny", "empire of sin", etc.

Bourgeois politicians in the USA, just like in other capi-

talist countries, resort to religious camouflage in order to vindicate their anti-popular activity; moreover, they enjoy direct support by church organizations and their right-wing activists. Thus, Reagan had clerical support during the US presidential elections in 1980. According to the press, political organizations headed by conservative Protestant preachers acted in unison with rightist Republicans and assisted them in helping Reagan win the election.

Religious issues carried even more weight in the pre-election campaign of 1984 in the USA. Reactionary evangelists hailed Reagan in churches. Their leaders insisted that only people like Reagan could stop the advance of Communists. In August 1984, the American newspaper *Christian Science Monitor* cited evidence of Reagan's being backed up by the right-wing branches of different religious denominations, and religious issues being readily used by Reagan for ideological and political purposes. The paper correctly noted that, "if they were purely religious, they would not have the alliance of Catholics and fundamentalist Protestants and some Orthodox Jews".[1]

It is not only the bourgeois politicians relying upon the support of the Church, who promote its active work in socio-economic and political spheres. Widely circulated in Western countries are publications favoring such work and containing recommendations concerning its character and objectives. By way of an example, let's take a look at an article by Kurt Huber of St. Gallen, editor of a bourgeois Swiss newspaper. The article is interesting because it dwells specifically on the problem of the "Christian Church and the Politics".[2]

The author of the article rejects in principle the dilemma of the evangelical teaching of the love of one's neighbor versus the political or civic activity of the Church. He maintains that the one does not preclude the other. Political activity is considered necessary for the Church on the grounds that it is part of society, part of the world that embraces justice and injustice, peace and war, affluence and poverty, freedom and slavery. This,

[1] *The Christian Science Monitor,* 14 August 1984, p. 32.
[2] *St. Galler Tageblatt,* 11 April 1981.

they argue, makes any organization responsible and calls for its action. Therefore, the Church, for example, is called upon not only for missionary work but also to promote financial assistance to developing countries whose people live in abject poverty; it is called upon to speak out for solidarity and justice, for a new world economy, that will overcome poverty and backwardness and turn the developing countries into equal partners in the world community. These are precisely the reasons why the Church in Switzerland, for example, handles international questions, problems of the "dissident" youth in Zurich, etc.

It follows that the scope of the socio-political activity of the Church can have quite a broad interpretation. Which way, then, and on whose behalf is this activity to unfold?

As for Huber's preferences, they leave no room for doubt. It is enough to look at his grievance over the fact that the World Council of Churches in Geneva (compelled to take heed of modern world's realities) sometimes comes up with political, anti-racist declarations, whose purpose is, the article says, to promote a radical change in the existing political relations in the sense of more "justice and peace" for the oppressed.[1]

Huber detects an undesirable bias in some of the documents issued by the Swiss church, such as, its 1980 Year-Book coming out in defense of the unemployed in Switzerland. He is especially chagrined over the assertion that unemployment is innate in the economic system of capitalism.

In the sphere of international policy, a similar position is held and corresponding recommendations given. For instance, the author of the article does not agree with those who place the blame for the threat of war, militarism, suppression of peoples, injustice and starvation on bourgeois society.

The social demands of the ruling circles in an antagonistic society addressed to any, albeit relatively independent, institution in the superstructure of that society are never ambiguous, religious organizations are encouraged to pursue quite a definite, namely pro-bourgeois political course.

[1] *St. Galler Tageblatt*, 11 April 1981.

Such practices are observed not only in those bourgeois countries where Christianity dominates, but everywhere else. Thus, the tendency to use religion for reactionary purposes is on the rise in postwar Japan. This is seen, as is stressed by some Japanese researchers in the book *The Revival of Religion. Attitude Toward Social Transformations* (Tokyo, 1978), in the reactivation of ultra-right religious organizations and other examples of politics and religion being intermixed in Japanese society.

Clerical tendencies are observed inside Japanese liberal religious-political organizations, too, such as the Soka Gakkai. This organization, representing the city poor, ruined petty bourgeoisie and déclassé social elements, advocates the creation of some "Buddhist", or "human" socialism designed to bring about a fusion of individual interests with those of society. They intend to do it by winning a majority in Parliament.

The intrusion into civil life, in defiance of the constitutional requirement for the separation of religion from politics, is accomplished by the Soka Gakkai with the help of its political party Komeito whose many rank-and-file members demand that the leadership work out a program aimed at carrying out genuinely democratic transformations.

However (as is shown in the book *Where Is Soka Gakkai Heading?* published in Japan in 1980), the "central lane principle" contained in the Komeito's new program and allegedly capable of overcoming the extremes of both the right- and left-wing parties is mere speculation on objectivist neutralism. W. Shichiri, the author of the book, provides the explanation of the role this principle has in a class-divided society: sometime before, it was the expression of aristocratic ideology backing up the Japanese imperial system; today it is being used to propagate the idea of collaboration between labor and capital. Thus, the Buddhist "central lane principle" is turned into the ethics of class collaboration as well.

Special emphasis should also be made on the necessity of a concrete historical approach to modern clericalism and revealing the specific socio-political content of its each manifestation. As has already been mentioned, in different regions and

countries, clericalism is invoked by different social forces pursuing various objectives depending on the level of socio-political development in the particular country as well as on the challenges currently facing the society there. Hence, the divergence in its social content, its specific manifestations in each given region. Thus, the broad masses of the Iranian public rallying under the green Islamic banner during the period of the anti-Shah movement were motivated by the significant, though formerly underestimated, role of the Shiite clergy in Iran. Let us recall in this connection the importance of the fact that a Shiite mullah (unlike a Sunnite, usually appointed and provided for by the state) lives on voluntary donations from the congregation. Whenever he participates at gatherings in mosques or at those sponsored by private persons, all kinds of social problems are discussed. At such gatherings, the mullah is looked to by the congregation for advice on the widest possible range of questions.

With the considerable funds obtained from believers, the clergy opened clinics, schools and charitable institutions for the poor during the Shah rule. Some preachers were critical of the social injustice and corruption (i.e., the corruption of the Shah court and among the Shah's American allies) and preached that a return to the Islam fundamentals would shelter virtue and national character from bourgeois contamination. Many believers had been persecuted and tortured under the Shah.

The argument set forth by the Shiite clergy in Iran in order to solidify its own position and enhance its prestige is interesting. According to the Shiites, no temporal power since the death of Imam XII in the 9th century has been legitimate or just. Justice in the Moslem community can only be restored with the advent of Imam back to earth (resurrection). Any government is an usurper. Therefore, the Shiite clergy questioned the authority of different dynasties that ruled the country and resisted the Shah's power each time it allowed the penetration of foreign bourgeois influence that might "pervert" Islam by introducing customs alien to indigenous traditions and traditional culture.

The theocratic concept of social arrangement vigorously

advocated by a number of religious activists in modern Iran includes the following clerical demands. First, its proponents, adhering to pan-Islamism, demand "international status for the Iranian Islamic Revolution"; they call for the creation of an "Islamic Pact" to include every Moslem nation in the world and everyone who is "guided by the compass of Islam". Second, they demand unconditional compliance of all personal and communal activity with Islamic canons. This embraces even such intimate questions as, for example, ladies' wear.[1] It also concerns the Constitution itself, the country's basic law. It is interesting to note the reasoning and interpretations given by the clerics forming the majority in the special "Council of Experts" that was given the task of working out the Iranian Constitution. They were out to substantiate the theocratic character of the basic law and officially provided for the "supreme ruler" in the person of Ayatollah Khomeini. Special emphasis was placed on the inviolability of the Islamic Constitution, the preservation of the imamate tradition being its sole prerequisite. With this purpose in mind, the fifth principle in the preamble—"On the Rule of Imam"—revives the role of the Shiite religious leader as the envoy of Imam XII who "disappeared". The "Supreme Leader of the Islamic Nation", incumbent with the mission of observing reverence for Koran by all government authorities, reigns supreme over any authority.

Since the supreme authority of Ayatollah Khomeini was given an official approval by a legislative body, it is now possible to bar any Shiite leader from taking over his office after his death. In this case, a "board of religious leaders" must be appointed, an improvised Council of Ulema, with the assigned task of pronouncing an opinion concerning any possible disagree-

[1]Things went so far that the Prosecutor General of the Islamic Republic of Iran released a declaration warning all the women employed in state and government institutions that they would be fired immediately if they did not dress in conformity with the requirements of Islam while at work. And in general, in the framework of "Islamization" being enforced here, all women are instructed to appear in public only wearing Moslem clothing. According to the press, there was a demonstration of women in the capital of Iran who demanded freedom of choice with regard to their clothes.

ment between the legislation adopted by the Parliament and the principles of Islam. Naturally, under these circumstances temporal authorities have no way of ignoring the advice bestowed by the "supreme ruler" or the "Board". While this Constitution is in effect, Iran will remain a theocratic state, although this does not preclude the possibility of some anti-imperialist tasks being solved there under favorable conditions.

Islamic clericals are trying to link the aspirations of the masses and social problems of the day with religious dogma in order to pursuade the worshipers to exclusively follow the path mapped out by them. In this connection, let us consider the recommendations given by the members of the seventh symposium on the study of Islamic thought that took place in the Algerian city of Tizi-Ouzou in July 1973.

Specifically, the recommendations provide that all the Moslem countries must bring their legislation in complete conformity with the shariat. Islamic indoctrination is to be conducted at all levels in high school and institutions of higher learning. The symposium decreed that the unity of both the religious community and the Islamic nation as a whole constitutes one of the basic principles of Islam. For the sake of this principle and to help coordinate the activities of the numerous religious institutions, it was proposed to set up a Council of the Islamic Nation to include representatives from all Moslem countries. There are important traces of anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism in the recommendations, but we are concerned in this case with the measure of religious penetration and the impact of Islam on different spheres of social life.

The canonization of civil life can also be observed in Israel. The rabbinate here seeks to preserve the fundamentals of Judaism in the country. The rabbins even interfere in the preparation and sale of food products, approving the appointed ritual slaughterers and meat cutters (the so-called "shohets"), inspecting the slaughterhouses and food industry enterprises. Whenever any violations of rabbinical regulations are discovered at enterprises, shops, restaurants, etc., their owners are boycotted. They may find themselves in financial trouble or go broke.

Medicine, too, is often influenced by religious canons in modern Israel. As is known, kidney, cornea, etc., transplants have long since been accepted as standard medical practice. Nevertheless, scientific achievements and overal social progress carry little weight with Israeli religious parties. Invoking the Judaic dogma, they insist on banning organ transplants.

The policy of deliberate interference in civil life by Israeli clerical circles, which have been represented in the government ever since the founding of the state, is especially clearly seen in their efforts to bring up Jewish youth in the spirit of religious fanaticism and chauvinism, in the spirit of Jewish ethnic superiority over other nations.

In Israel, clericals have achieved a dominant position in kindergartens and schools, where such subjects as "God's Law", "Jewish Self-Consciousness", history, geography, etc., are taught by textbooks prepared by rabbies. The latter, according to the press, have allotted thrice as much time for the teaching of the Torah as, for instance, for general history.

What we have discussed here about the separation of religion per se from politics, of the individual and social behavior sanctified by religion and practiced under its aegis, on the one hand, from behavior prompted by the circumstances of life, on the other hand, helps differentiate the assessments given to events related to different spheres of social life, political or ideological.

It should be noted that the separation of political interests, views, sentiments and actions from the forms of their religious manifestation does not at all signify that these spheres exist independently and run parallel to each other within one religious system, in the people's world outlook and actions, without excercising influence upon each other. Splitting a single religious complex mechanically is out of the question. For the researcher working on the basis of dialectical and historical materialism, it is important to evaluate the impact of the individual's nonscientific, religious outlook (as well as his other illusions) on his frame of mind, his world outlook and social conduct.

When analyzing the historically crystallized bonds between religion and politics and studying the mechanics of religion being used in temporal life, it should be emphasized again that

the adherents of secularization, free-thinking and democracy have been advocating the separation of religion from politics over the years. However, in this author's opinion, this is hardly possible to accomplish while religion and politics continue to coexist. Even under socialist democracy (let us recall here the main channels of mutual permeation of religion and politics discussed earlier), which precludes the use of religion for political purposes by state authorities and closes off the channel of reactionary clerical interference by confessional workers in spheres alien to religion, certain political activities of religious organizations are in evidence, such as participation of priesthood in popular democratic movements, the struggle for peace, in particular. And then, sermons on religious topics as such—on the upbringing of the parishioners, their life values, their world outlook—eventually, of course, have something to do with politics.

Therefore, the Marxist approach to studying the problem of religion implies that it cannot be separated from politics and isolated from its impact on the practical activities of the masses; meanwhile, to follow Lenin's viewpoint, it should not be pushed to the forefront, where it certainly does not belong. Lenin stressed that, "a Marxist must be a materialist, i.e., an enemy of religion, but a dialectical materialist, i.e., one who treats the struggle against religion not in an abstract way, not on the basis of remote, purely theoretical, never varying preaching, but in a concrete way, on the basis of the class struggle which is going on in *practice* and is educating the masses more and better than anything else could."[1]

Impact of Mass Religious Consciousness Upon the Ideology and Policies of the Church

Modern social movements connected in any way with religion indicate that new, intensely interesting and important problems are becoming crucial today. These deal with *new aspects*

[1] V. I. Lenin, "The Attitude of the Workers' Party to Religion", *Collected Works,* Vol. 15, pp. 407-08.

of the subject in question. When considering the role of the religious factor in social movements, it is important today to bring forth whatever new changes it has undergone characteristic for the current epoch, for the given region and in any particular denomination, to look at the characteristics of modern reactionary clericalism inside mass movements and arrive at ways of neutralizing it.

This approach necessitates a study of both the current forms of crisis in religion, the weakening of its traditional positions, new modernization trends in the ideology and policies of Church organizations; it requires taking into account new political and sociological factors at work in all regions, especially in developing countries, factors that boost religious activities there without being intrinsically tied with religion. Finally, one cannot fail to take into consideration the current type of confrontation between the two socio-political systems—socialism and capitalism. The strengthening positions of world socialism and further expansion of the class and national liberation movement have a strong effect on religious organizations and movements.

Further, quite important in an all-round discussion of the involvement of religious masses in socio-political movements is the fact that several common global problems have now come to the foreground, problems that are of concern to all people (regardless of whether they are believers or atheists), and invigorate religious movements, stimulating their direct association with politics. What is meant here, above all, is nuclear arms, the threat of tremendous loss of human life, as well as the danger of an ecological crisis, shortage of fresh water, clean air, vegetation on the planet, etc.

The everyday life and intellect of each individual and each nation are being enriched by progress in science and technology, which affects people's standards of living, possibilities for the expansion of religion, etc.

Great socio-political, scientific, technological and ideological changes peculiar to our dynamic epoch have their own effect on the traditionally conservative religious establishments. In recent decades, they have gone through a greater evolution than in many preceding centuries. Change and inno-

vation have affected diverse, often unexpected, spheres and phenomena. It was necessary to modernize the interpretation of dogmas and cult practices, and attitudes to other religions, atheism and atheists, philosophical knowledge, theory and practice of socialism, national liberation movements, capitalism, scientific and technological progress and the problems of war and peace.

Some ideologically wavering individuals, who earlier shared materialistic views, were motivated to accept the current ideological and social role of religion, as religion took on a more modern character and different religious organizations became involved in the struggle against social reaction, for peace, democracy and socialism. Some even announced a supposedly radical change in religious dogmata by way of a "growing mutation". They are ready to believe that the present-day reformed faith does not favor a dualistic vision of the world—spiritualism—which is "based on the opposition of the earthly to the heavenly, of the carnal to the spiritual, of the temporal to the holy, the transient to the eternal, of the immanent to the transcendental".[1]

In order to be able to reach deeper into the essence of the ideological and social characteristics of religious modernism, which has a certain effect on some popular movements and the contest of ideas in the modern world, it is important to begin with establishing the determining objective factors that affect the religious complex and eventually compel the Church to embark upon the path of modernism. Only proceeding from these factors one could reach an understanding of subjective phenomena; the point is to understand and describe these factors, to understand the tactics of the clericalists who see the need for modernizing religion.

Ecclesiastics of different denominations attempt to modernize religion mainly as a result of scientific and social progress, achievements of existing socialism and the rise of the popular and national liberation movements, which have served to devalue religion and diminish its traditional influence on believers. The

[1] R. Garaudy, *Reconquête de l'espoir*, Paris, 1971, p. 113.

status of religion is being impaired by the social awakening of the broad masses, including believers, and by their active involvement in the work for restructuring the world on the basis of justice.

The worldwide achievements of socialism, involvement of the working masses in the active struggle against social and national oppression, their stand for the revolutionary transformation of society, for peace, halting the arms race, eliminating the threat of nuclear war, a rational solution of ecological problems—all these things have prompted believers to significantly reconsider traditional dogmas and have lessened the role of religious factors in their lives. Thus, there appears to be a characteristic decline in the number of people willing to put their faith in a divine savior or trust his servants here on earth to determine their destinies.

The openly reactionary position taken by right-wing leaders of church organizations on topical socio-political issues has helped this process significantly. Thus, for instance, in developed capitalist countries, where Christianity is quite common, never since the origination of the faith has there been such obvious disparity between historic realities, people's interests and hierarchic orthodox precepts. Indeed, social and political manifestations of the working class and working people in defence of their vital interests were never "sanctioned" by the Church, moreover, they were in direct contradiction with the social doctrine, political theories and practices of Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant organizations. Hence, the inevitable cleavage between modern believers and traditional church precepts that failed to accommodate their requirements, sentiments and demands.

According to a survey concerning the issue, believers are now more aware of socio-political ideas. A sociological study published in the French Catholic newspaper *La Croix* concludes that an overwhelming majority of believers in that country are concerned, above all, about problems of social injustice and the growth of social inequality. The most important problems to them are real wages, the nationalization of major industrial and bank corporations, vocational training, military prepara-

tions and atomic power.[1] It was precisely in view of these changes in the minds of believers and in an effort to somehow try to enhance public respect for the Church that Pope John XXIII once stated that the Pontiff needed to call upon all his children to join their efforts to help the Church to resolve all contemporary problems.

When dealing with factors fostering secularization trends, free-thinking and atheistic views today, it is important to bear in mind that modern man's dispositions and world outlook, including those of believers with whom the destinies of religion and the Church are directly linked, are being fashioned under the impact of scientific and technological progress, which is helping to reveal the inadequacy of religious concepts in the world today and gradually draw man toward temporal mentality and materialistic perception.

The crisis of religion is reflected, first of all, in indifference toward religion and faster rate of severance from the Church, as well as gradual growth of atheism and free-thinking among the younger generation, especially the working class youth. Politics, morals, art and other forms of consciousness become emancipated along with other spheres of social life. The tendency today for the secularization of public consciousness and life causes concern at all levels of ecclesiastic hierarchy and among organizations related to religion. For example, official documents of the Catholic Church, including papal addresses, express the increasing concern among the Catholic clergy over the spread of atheism. When receiving a group of Jesuit Catholic University rectors on August 6, 1975, Pope Paul VI deplored the "loss of Christian values replaced by humanism, which evolved into genuine secularization". It is connected with the fact, the Pontiff went on, that "many Christian virtues have lost their attraction for the youth".[2]

The reigning Pope John Paul II has not infrequently grievously mentioned the growing secularization process. At a reception for the participants of the Congress "Evangelization and Athe-

[1] *La Croix,* 17 January 1977.
[2] *L'Osservatore Romano,* 8 August 1975.

ism" that took place in Rome in October 1980, the Pontiff called the massive proliferation of atheism a "spiritual drama of our times". According to the Pope, atheism, which used to be the realm of a few intellectuals, had become a massive phenomenon blocking the Church. The Pontiff grievously acknowledged the immense scope of the "present secularism", which engulfed the East and the West, socialist and capitalist countries, the worlds of labor and culture, the young and the old. And this situation is characteristic of all the continents.[1]

Similar ideas have been and are being expressed (based on data from censuses and various studies) by other ecclesiastics as well. Thus, Bartolomeo Sorge, Director of the Vatican journal *Civilta cattolica* makes a suggestion in his book that in Italy, for a number of reasons, there is more than just coolness, but even loss of faith among the masses. Sorge mentions that 97% of the population in Italy is considered to be Catholic according to the census. In spite of this, 59.7% of the people, mostly belonging to the proletarian and bourgeois strata, claim that they are indifferent to religion, 11.3% disagree with the Church, although they show great interest in what it stands for and does. Sorge classifies these as imaginative and culturally initiated atheists. Only 28.6% of Italians maintained their faith and observed the rituals. Even this sector is stratified: there are conservatives traditionally following the precepts of the Church, and progressives. Only a tiny group of about one per cent of the population consists of "activists" who pursue vigorous individual or collective work in the life of the parish. They can be encountered in provincial areas, in Catholic educational institutions and neophytic societies.

In trying to restrain the unfolding process of secularization, the church leadership must carefully examine the phenomenon. Thus, the Vatican Secretariat for the Non-believers explained the importance of entering the subjects of Marxism and atheism into the curricula of Catholic seminaries, stressing that "secularization and the spread of atheism in our times is a social phe-

[1] *Ibid.*, 11 October 1980.

nomenon that gradually engulfs not only intellectuals, but broader popular masses as well".[1]

The continued steady reduction in the number of religious followers among all population categories on all the continents is reflected in numerous questionnaires and studies that are being conducted by religious sociologists (or sponsored by a church organization and carried out by specialized sociological institutions) in their futile attempts to somehow contain this objective process. Thus, a comparison of the findings of the public opinion poll taken in France in the summer of 1975 with the results of previous inquiries indicated a steady decline in the number of religious rites observed. Mass attendance, for example, was down from 22% of the total population in 1971 to 16% in 1975 (by other estimates, even to 14%).

Such developments, of course, tend to put the priesthood in a pessimistic frame of mind. As one priest bluntly put it, the French church is dying out. To prove the point he cites comparative data indicating that churches in France were attended by 35% of the population in 1958, while in 1974 the figure dropped to 14%.

These figures were published in the newspaper *Journal du dimanche* (August 17, 1975). Five years later, the paper brought up the subject again. It reported (November 1, 1980) that only 12% of the French people attended Sunday service in 1979, and that the number of young people breaking from the Church was on the rise. For example, the number of young men and women attending churches dropped by 10% from 1976 to 1980. A study conducted in 1977 showed that 30% of French citizens between 15 and 30 years of age claim that they do not believe in God at all.

Describing the situation of the Church in France when lecturing in the USA in 1980, Bishop Poupard (later appointed Chairman of the Vatican Secretariat for the Non-Believers) admitted that more and more people in the country were questioning religious values, that church attendance was shrinking, members of the clergy were more frequently leaving the church

[1] *Ibid.*, 25 November 1970.

and the number of religious wedding ceremonies was sharply on the decline. All this indicated a loss of faith, especially among the youth. Bishop Poupard cited the following figures concerning the religious situation in France for the year 1980: of the French citizens registered as Catholics (80%) only 15% were regular church goers, 25% went to Church from time to time, while 45% discarded masses altogether. Poupard therefore concluded that the epidemic of non-belief was slowly but steadily prevailing.

A similar situation is observed in other regions of the world, especially in economically developed countries. In Japan, for example, a special study published in Tokyo about the state of religious consciousness in the country in relation to social changes is reflected in the following data: the share of passive worshipers in 1958 was 35%, in 1963—31%, in 1968—30%, in 1973—25%. As for active believers, they numbered 10% in 1963 and 8% in 1973.

The clergy is also rapidly shrinking in number. This is the result of a growing "desertion" among the priesthood and the fact that fewer men are choosing to join the clergy. Thus, in France again, 573 persons took holy orders in 1968, whereas only 170 men joined the priesthood in 1974. The situation has been the same in other countries as well. In the USA, for example, from 1965 through 1979, about 15 thousand priests left the Church, while the number of seminary students went down from 49,000 to 11,200.[1]

In Italy, the number of those joining the priesthood has shrunk to an unprecedented level. The rate of ordination in the 1950s was about 1,200 clergymen a year. In 1961, it dropped to 701, and in 1978—to 384; 116 seminaries out of 375 in the country were closed from 1970 to 1978, while the number of seminary students decreased from 23,000 to 10,000. Over the same period, the number of pastors diminished from 48,500 to 41 thousand. The picture is more or less the same in Churches of other Western countries.

Various institutions and establishments of the Church are

[1] *L'Humanité*, 4 October 1979.

beset with cadre shortages and increasing cases of clergy disagreement with the policies of the leadership. Seminaries, monasteries and religious schools are often forced to close or enter into an open conflict with the hierarchy. This can be seen in many parts of the world, be it the monastery of Cuernova in Mexico or the Franciscan school of scholastic theology in Verona (Italy), a sharp decline in the enrollment to Portuguese seminaries or the opposition of the Dutch episcopacy to the Vatican over dogmatic issues.

Let us turn to traditionally most conservative establishments, such as the order of Jesuits (Society of Jesus) and the order of nuns, which have always been unflinching and faithful stalwarts of Catholicism. The following facts are a clear indication that new trends are developing among them.

Until recently, the order of Jesuits was known as one of the most important religious institutions in the Catholic Church. Bourgeois press estimates that there were 27,169 Jesuits in the world in 1980 and 26, 000 in 1985. Over the last decade, the order has been going through an acute crisis: there is growing discontent among its membership over Vatican ordinances, and the number of those wishing to enter the order is declining. Since the end of the 2nd Vatican Council, the number of Jesuits has been reduced by nearly nine thousand members who abandoned the order by breaking the oath of celibacy (50 per cent), because of an overly ascetic way of life prescribed by the charter of the order (35 per cent), because of disagreement with the Vatican's official policies (15 per cent).

The order is split, in fact, into the right and left factions over dogmatic issues. The decisions of the 2nd Vatican Council triggered new tendencies in the work of Jesuits who must adapt themselves to the changing world situation. This brought about growing tensions in relations between the order of Jesuits and the higher echelons of the Curia Romana.

Some theologians of the order, whose members are acknowledged the "intellectual elite" of the Catholic Church, conclude that a revision of the celibacy oath for priests has become necessary, at least for those living outside religious communities. They are also in favor of liberalizing birth control procedures,

which is clearly in disagreement with the encyclical of Paul VI's *Humane vitae* (On Human Life), especially devoted to this question, as well as with the statements made by Pope John Paul II.

However, what lies at the root of tensions between the Curia Romana and the order is the recent change of the latter's policy toward left-wing movements, and above all, the communist movement. This is especially true in Latin American countries where Jesuits are conducting their most active missionary work. They frequently throw their support behind those national episcopates which fight against fascist regimes and promote democracy in their countries. Some Jesuits have been suppressed by dictatorial regimes in certain Latin American countries.

Notable in this regard are statements made by Pedro Arrupe, a former General of the order, in the Italian National Press Association (Federazione Nazionale della Stampa Italiana). Arrupe stated that Jesuits were often accused of being Communists and denied the accusation. He went on to say that people would not be satisfied with words today, especially in Latin America where people lived like beasts in a cage. Arrupe concluded that it was wrong therefore to preclude in advance any kind of a dialogue or even critical cooperation with groups and movements of Marxist orientation.

Statements like this, though so strange for a General of the Society of Jesus, show that even this order, for decades renowned for its vehement struggle against Marxist ideas and socialist countries, has to modify its tactics. This is due, first of all to the growing influence of socialism in the world and wide acceptance of Marxist ideas by people's masses. Allowing for the moods and sentiments of millions of deprived believers in Latin America (comprising nearly half of all Catholics in the world), the order of Jesuits is trying to win the sympathies of the working people, among other means, by a "dialogue with Marxism".

Rebellion and disillusionment are likewise observed among nuns today. In the autumn of 1976 503 leaders of Italian female monastic orders gathered for a conference in Rome where they discussed, openly or at secret sessions, the problem of an

unprecedented crisis caused by the constantly increasing number of desertions from nunneries, lack of fresh conversions, disparity between statutory regulations and living conditions in modern society, more frequent cases of breaking the monastic oath, suicides, etc.

The leaders of monastic orders discussed a document that the Vatican wanted to keep secret, but the Italian magazine *Panorama* somehow got access to it. It was the first statistical study of the situation in Italian nunneries. The data give a clear picture of the crisis among Catholic nuns in Italy. Over a five-year period, from 1970 to 1974, seven per cent of the total number of nuns broke their vows (according to official church data there were 138,158 nuns in 1974).

Of considerable alarm to the Church were figures relating to the age of nuns cited in this document: 10% of all nuns are over 74 years of age, 28% are between 60 and 74, 32%—between 45 and 60, 24%—between 30 and 45, and only 6% are under 30 years of age.

The book, written by a knowledgeable author, arouses interest not simply because it analyses the process of a sharp decline in the number of women taking the veil, but also because the author tries to sketch the social and cultural type of the Italian nun. A typical nun, the author sums up, is the product of a typical Italian family averaging four children, with zealous Catholics for parents often consenting to their daughter's taking the veil.

The data given in the book concerning to cultural level of nuns is distressing. Most of them—40%—have only a primary education, 31%—incomplete secondary education, 25.25% finished secondary school. Only 3.75% of nuns have a higher education; of this number, only one per cent of the women finished college after taking the veil. There are 25 thousand nuns working as nursery teachers, 11 thousand medical nurses, 3,500 school teachers, 7 thousand primary school teachers and 2 thousand activists in charity organizations and institutions.

Nuns read almost nothing except church publications (about 60%), only 20.75% of them listen to radio programs and 31.54% watch TV.

The Church has lost some ground in developing countries, too. The centennial celebrations of missionary work conducted in the Congo were held in the summer of 1983 under the slogan of "renovation" of the local Catholic Church. The need for "renovation", according to the Congolese press, arose from the "crisis of confidence" with regard to the Church and an appreciable aloofness of the population, especially the youth. The Archbishop of Brazzaville, Barthélémi Batantu, has expressed his concern that many were beginning to find belief in God and a Christian way of life useless and futile, and that we were witnessing the birth of a new generation indifferent toward religion.

Books are now being written by bourgeois authors, both secular and religious, who are trying to understand the causes of the modern religious crisis. A study made by Mario Cuminetti, a specialist in modern theology, is interesting. In his book *Loss of Faith by Catholics in Italy. 1965-1980,* Cuminetti sees the cause for the crisis in faith in Italy in the impact of some "radical changes", of which the most important, in Cuminetti's opinion, is the "transformation of the land of peasants into a land of workers and those employed in the sphere of service".[1] Industrialization triggered mass migration from rural to urban areas, from the South to the North, with all the ensuing social, cultural and political consequences. The "traditional peasant culture", formerly tied in closely with the Catholic world, lost some of its values in the process. The author also concedes the fact that wider school education and television viewing have been undermining the traditional posture of Catholic culture and moulding a secular mentality. All this has gradually brought about in Italy a "cooperation of forces that were considered alien and hostile to each other only yesterday".[2]

Much literature, both religious and temporal, published abroad contains statistical data, the results of research, surveys and opinion polls among different population cross sections, which tend to indicate considerable expansion of free-thinking

[1] M. Cuminetti, *Il Dissenso cattolico in Italia 1965-1980,* Milan 1983, p. 71.
[2] *Ibid.,* p. 73.

and atheism among the population in developed capitalist countries.

However, the roots of the contemporary religious crisis reach beyond growing godlessness, atheism and indifference to dogma and cult. The Church hierarchy must also reckon with the actual content of the aspirations of the working people, with the sentiments of believers who are striving to revaluate their religious creeds and, in fact, the entire practice and policy of the Church in order to eliminate obvious divergences between the Church and the spirit of modern times, man's present interests and aspirations.

Historic experience indicates that any religion assumes different forms and levels of its manifestation at each stage of social development. Along with the official church doctrine (embedded in the Holy Scriptures and legends of the given religion and protected by relevant institutions), there has existed and still exists, so to say, "popular belief", everyday religious consciousness. The latter, though formed on the basis of official religious dogmas, absorbs a large amount of ideas prompted by the living experience, traditions, needs and interests of believers.

Today this process—together with a general shift to the left, more access to the achievements of culture and civilization and participation of the masses in the liberation movement—has assumed a particularly large scope. An elucidating inquiry into the state of belief among popular masses (as distinct from official doctrinal concepts) was made by the Catholic priest R. Pannet.

In discussing the features of "people's Catholicism" as a form of religious perception and manifestation, Father Pannet presents abundant material intended to prove that the basic role in the functioning of beliefs among people belongs to traditions—local, regional, civic and especially family ones—as well as to factors of an emotional and aesthetic nature. The author concludes that "people's Catholicism", in comparison with official Catholicism, looks much less transcendental and, in effect, amounts to a form of a family life style, although it still contains Christian culture and Catholic cult.[1] The ideological

[1] R. Pannet, *Le Catholicisme populaire. 30 ans après,* Paris, 1974, p. 179.

content of "people's Catholicism", according to Father Pannet's study, is quite controversial; it often combines conflicting elements, such as, for example, religious belief with its appeal to love one's neighbor, which paves the way for class collaboration, and class instinct, compelling a meaningful number of worshipers to vote for a revolutionary Marxist organization, the Communist Party.[1]

The highly mixed content of today's religions sometimes compels church activists to ponder the question: what is today's God to man? Data collected by sociological research conducted in many countries of Western Europe led one author to come up with rather a categorical conclusion: "The assertion of belief in God even by most ardent church advocates does not necessarily mean their adherence to all the dogmata proclaimed by the church".[2] The world outlook of modern believers, he maintains, is characterized by a muddle of views and perceptions with believers drifting from one to another as the situation changes.

The noted varied forms and levels of religious perception, both official and common, are under the influence of existing realities and affected by one another, thereby assisting in the evolution of the entire religious complex. A remark by Engels in one of his early works comes to mind: "Even the most consistent Christian cannot fully emancipate himself from the circumstances of our time; the latter compels him to introduce modifications into Christianity."[3]

The gap between temporal mentality, people's everyday life and church ordinances even in bourgeois society has become so obvious that Pope Paul VI made a special point of it at a Vatican reception on September 17, 1975. He grieved over the fact that for many people being a Christian did not lead to any practical consequences either in personal or social life. More than that, the Pope stressed, in the mind of modern man there exists a sharp distinction, even a breach, between his behavior as

1 *Ibid.*, p. 186.
2 J. Duquesne, *Dieu pour l'homme d'aujourd'hui*, Paris, 1970, p. 102.
3 F. Engels, "Frederick William IV, King of Prussia", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, 1975, p. 361.

a citizen, his social responsibilities and religious decrees. The general consensus has undergone a transformation: in social and professional spheres today, someone who professes Christianity is thought to be lacking in common sense, too involved with traditional clericalism and opposing the freedom of discussion and action.

Religious organizations are being "detheologized" today because believers are acquiring an increasing attachment to earthly objectives guided by their needs and are less aware of "religious values" as such. Earlier any practical assistance to man in his life was interpreted as service to God, while now service to God is understood by common believers as service to man. Social realities, their needs and requirements have become the factors that determine all the actions of believers.

It should be mentioned in this connection that Cardinal Marty, Archbishop of Paris, was quite outspoken at a session of the 5th Episcopal Synod of the Catholic Church held in Rome in the autumn of 1977. He conceded that the world outlook of a modern believer, especially a young one, accommodates many ideas and religious belief existing there just as one among several others.[1] A more sceptical attitude toward religion and the supernatural has led to viewing religion as a mere auxiliary medium for solving problems of everyday life. Moreover, this scepticism increases the changes that liberation and revolutionary aspirations, hopes of prosperity for the working people, their national and social freedom will be clad in religious clothes.

The changing mentality of believers must be reckoned with by all religious denominations, which, in turn, must produce new official interpretations of the antinomy between the earthly and the heavenly, which is traditional in any religious system. Interesting in this regard is the communiqué on theological discussions between representatives of the Russian Orthodox and Catholic churches held in Italy in the summer of 1975. Here, Christian salvation is described more like liberation with an accent on the fact that it begins in this world. Therefore, the communiqué points out, today the Church is called upon to

[1] *L'Humanité,* 21 October 1977.

serve the cause of justice, peace and deliverance from both personal and collective evil through the cooperation of all the people of goodwill, both believers and non-believers. Thus, the desire to bring the religious doctrine as close as possible to common, humane aspirations, to earthly values and hopes is being ever more clearly expressed today by those advocating religious renovation. Similar motifs have been present in several addresses made by Pope John Paul II. For example, the Pontiff's encyclical *Redemptor hominis* (the Savior of Man), 1979, expounds the idea that religion does not detract man from his creative effort in this world but rather stimulates it, promotes his development and progress. The encyclical stresses, in particular, that the Church, inspired by eschatological belief, considers it important for its mission to care for man, people's future on earth, and therefore, the whole course of development and progress.

Modernistic interpretations relating to the problems of eschatology, the essence of the church mission itself, the "reason for the existence" of the church establishment, reflect the tarnishing of religion's image in the minds of most believers and their new attitude toward the clergy. Believers would like their clergymen to hold democratic principles, to be concerned with urgent problems and help in the fight against evil and tyranny here on earth.

It is precisely these sentiments, demands and aspirations of millions of believers that have been formed under the influence of the epoch's revolutionary trend, socialist and general democratic movements, tremendous achievements in science and technology and the spreading secular ideology and materialistic views, that force the clergy to follow a modernistic course in search of "renovating" interpretations of today's social and spiritual realities. This activity represents an attempt by the Church to retain its ideological control over believers through the use of more sophisticated leverage.

An interesting tendency is clearly noted here—the transformation, to a certain extent, in the content of work and functions of some links in the church establishment. This process can be easily observed in mass clerical organizations functioning in

non-socialist countries. Set up as an instrument of political control over civil life and the consciousness of masses, they themselves fall under their [the masses'] control. As a result, the activities of mass organizations existing under the aegis of the Church more often than not assume a meaning different from the one preferred by their right-wing leaders, and an extremely controversial situation arises. The Church depends on its mass organizations, but as their membership grows, involving more of the working masses, so does the opposition of the rank-and-file members in those organizations to the internal and external policies pursued by reactionary elements in the leadership. The working strata among believers become more strongly attracted to their unity with the vanguard of the working class and other population groups. This is characteristic also for a number of Latin American and West European countries.

The laity that is dominated by clerical organizations, nonetheless, is trying with increasing vigor to modify the policy and practices of those organizations and of the church with regard to important issues of the day in various spheres of sociopolitical life and international politics. Thus, the working believers are increasingly demanding that leaders of church organizations actively oppose nuclear war and growing international tension, and support the consolidation and advancement of detente and finding reasonable solutions to ecological and other urgent problems concerning all mankind.

This turnaround in the minds of believers must be taken into account by the clergy, especially those who deal directly with the communicants. And again, some clergymen sincerely believe it to be their duty to support the working people in general democratic movements and their social struggle.

Millions of believers, with their new requirements and aspirations, are forcing church organizations to look for new approaches, new ways and opportunities for continuing their "dialogue with the congregation" or face the threat of further loss of control over their shrinking parishes. Therefore, with due regard for the epoch, conservative religious institutions have adopted a course of "re-evaluating values" so well shaken down over centuries. This is true in Europe and Asia, America and

Africa, among Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox, Moslem, Buddhist and, in fact, any other religious organizations. Moreover, churches are modernizing their positions in literally every field where religious organizations are active. The adaptation of religion to the contemporary epoch extends far beyond a gradual purging of archaisms and obvious absurdities, the simplification of traditional rituals and making them cheaper for believers. Allowing for the peculiarities of the given region and religious denomination, new policies are being fashioned, and new methods are being used to tackle a wide range of issues: workers' and national liberation movements, modern scientific and technological progress, threat of war, the arms race, demographic and ecological problems, secular power, the bourgeois exploitative state, etc.

Revision of clearly obsolete religious canons is accepted even by those circles that cherished traditions. Thus, early in June, 1983, in Mecca, an international conference of Moslem theologians considered a proposal to modernize the Shariat ("Ijtihad"), a practice that was formerly banned ("Wahhabism"). The rationale behind this proposal was the fact that Islam is considered an archaic system in many parts of the world; associated with it are such traditions as polygamy, stoning adulterers...

Naturally, the social effect and actual political consequences of such modernistic tendencies are different in different spheres of their manifestation; international politics or theology proper, mass liberation movements or cult, etc. Dialectically, they may represent an unequivocally positive trend in one sphere (politics), while in another (religion per se) they may strengthen the basis for an anti-scientific world outlook.

A visible process of integration, a desire to merge all the organizations belonging to one particular confession of faith can now be observed in the work of, perhaps, every major religious denomination concerned with overcoming the crisis of religion. It is precisely this process of integration that brought about the creation of, for instance, the World Fellowship of Buddhists within Buddhism, a variety of Moslem associations, such as the World Islamic Congress, the Al-Azhar Islamic Research Academy, and others, within Islam. Integration has

become especially widespread in the ecumenical movement, that is, the movement coordinated by the World Council of Churches for the unification of all Christian churches.

The World Council of Churches (currently including most Protestant and Orthodox churches, the Armenian-Grigorian and some other churches) is attempting to integrate all the branches of religious activity: international, socio-political, missionary, charity. On the whole, the World Council of Churches is engaged in searching for ways to unite all the schools of Christianity. For one thing, a variety of international theological commissions have been working over several years for the purpose of elaborating a unified interpretation of the problems of ecclesiology, Christology, etc.

Ecumenical discussion is concerned also with questions of public worship, the language and arrangement used, their interconnection with the "language" of the gospel. In its practical work, the modern ecumenical movement relies on some modernistic ideas of religious philosophy. For instance, the elaboration of the principles of general hermeneutics is based by ecumenic scholars on the ideas of the Bultmann school, while in the debates on the nature of the Church, they borrow ecclesiological and Christological elements from the teachings of prominent Protestant theologians of the 20th century (Paul Tillich, Karl Barth, and others).

In general, the consolidation of the ecumenical movement has been influenced, most of all, by the ideas and principles of the so-called liberal theology, while conservative theological schools (fundamentalists) have been, for the most part, against this movement. True enough, the relationship between the advocates of liberalism and fundamentalism has lately shown signs of change. Representatives of modern, the so-called "moderate fundamentalism", are revising their views and seeking a compromise with the liberals, including one on the issue of the ecumenical movement. Ecumenical tendencies are gaining momentum inside all Christian churches. Many theologians, Orthodox and even Catholic as well as protestant, wish to present their views as all-Christian ones, and, contrary to their former practices, they now avoid emphasizing their specific

church peculiarities and distinctions.

Posing as a kind of a "modern school", those theologians sharing ecumenical principles allow a rather liberal mixture of theology and temporal bourgeois social thought in their works. This is traceable, for example, in ecumenical interpretations of the social consequences of the scientific and technological revolution, social transformations, futuristic concepts, human problems and organizational sociology.

However, such an ecumenical interpretation of these questions is invariably nothing more than a generalized idealistically religious treatment of the subject, which is intended (in spite of its sometimes radically renovated premise) to "suit" every brand of Christianity. This is what the ecumenical vision, for example, of the prospects of scientific, technological and social progress comes down to: the scientific-technological revolution does not resolve any social problems, but rather places man in a paradoxical situation of "subjugation", since the enslavement of man by nature is replaced by man's enslavement to his own domination over nature. It follows from this concept that the crisis of science and technology can only be overcome by placing scientific and technological progress under effective religious-ethical control based on the creationistic idea of man's responsibility for everything made by God. The problems of social change are given a similar interpretation by those theologians sharing ecumenical views. While admitting social change as necessary, they try to adapt the Church to the action of the masses driven to it by the feeling of social protest. Of course, they work on fallacious premises and thus fail to see class antagonisms as the cause of social change. Rather they look for the cause in the contradictions between "rich" and "poor" nations. As to the nature and objectives of the social revolution, they all tend to distort them associating revolution with eschatological ideas.

In the treatment of the problem of man—the central problem of ecumenical discussions—there is always a visible desire to find a philosophic substantiation for the traditional Christian interpretation of man as a product of divine creation renovated with the latest data provided by natural sciences. Christian anthropol-

ogy is modernized by tying together problems of man's origin and the theory of evolution, employing even eugenic concepts. What is interesting is that, while accentuating the Eurocentric approach to the problem of the individual, personality and society, some ecumenical theologians point out the necessity for establishing a dialogue and cooperation with their counterparts in Asian and African countries who, in their opinion, must strengthen ecumenical positions.

Interestingly, theologians who share ecumenical ideas are inclined to use in their discourse the most recent sociological concepts, such as, for instance, the "theory of organization" currently popular among bourgeois sociologists. They are attempting to use this theory to solve problems related to the organization of religious community, power and authority, relationship between the Church and temporal organizational structures, etc. Their chief purpose here is to make use of sociological methods to prove the eternal role of the unified Church as an indispensable element in the social structure of any community of people.

The Catholic Church is showing increasing interest in the propaganda of ecumenical views, nonetheless, it never fails to emphasize the fundamental justice of "its own faith". Essentially, the goal of Pope John Paul II is the same: to create a unified church. His argument, of course, is unequivocally theological. For instance, the Pontiff often identifies all of Christianity with "the flesh of God", which is of many members. Such ideas were expounded by the Pope, in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity of January 18-25, 1981.[1]

There are several reasons why theologians of different Christian denominations would like to bring their forces closer together. The most important of these is the desire to obstruct the spread of secularism and scientific materialism by joining efforts. It is reasons like this that most readily stimulate the research carried out by ecumenically minded ecclesiastics who are stubbornly bent on one purpose—that of creating a monolithic theology through overcoming diverging interpretations of

[1] *L'Osservatore Romano,* 22 January 1981.

Christology and soteriology (the doctrine of salvation through Christ) and the evaluating of ecclesiological problems, the essence and operation of the Church and its basic characteristics. A comparative study of doctrinal disagreement among Christian churches, in their opinion, is bound not only to help devise a comprehensive Christian teaching, but also facilitate cooperation among churches in their practical work and eventually the formation of a single religious entity.

However, the differences peculiar to Christian denominations, moulded by history and set by centuries of experience, are so rigid that the desired unity is still a long way off. At present only possible models and possibilities for unified ritual procedures are being discussed. Neither have there yet been formulated principles for a uniform interpretation of the Bible. The ecumenical clergy expects disparities in the interpretation of Biblical texts to be overcome through the elaboration of a coordinated variety of hermeneutics that would include a dialectical unity of the whole and its parts.

The vagaries of the modern Christian ecumenical movement are the result of the deepening crisis of religion, the expanding process of secularization in social life. Yet, the movement represents a link in the overall modernization policies common to Christian churches. It is not incidental that even organizations outside the World Council of Churches must revise their policies, both with regard to the World Council of Churches itself and in relation to separate Christian denominations, and increase cooperation with them on a wide range of issues. In the world today, no denomination or Church can afford to continue old-fashioned internal bickering. Rather, they seek to find a "common language", organize common action against the growing threat—expansion of materialistic, scientific views. Thus, when visiting the FRG in 1980, Pope John Paul II met with representatives of Christian churches which had broken away from Rome some time in the past and urged more active dialogues with them. With the Pontiff's consent, a joint commission of West German Catholics and Protestants was set up to study ecumenical problems. This commission points out the common aspects of these two denominations

and calls for patiently following the path of Christian unification.

Another expression of this policy was the apostolic message by Pope John Paul II of January 2, 1981, wherein he declared "Saints Cyril and Methodius as patrons of Europe". Until that time, the Catholic St. Benedict had been the sole patron of Europe, that honor being bestowed on him by Pope Paul VI in 1964. Now Orthodox Saints seemed to be allowed honors, too. The Vatican's argument in favor of this action was interesting. The apostolic message stressed that the decision had been made due to many historical factors related both to ancient and modern history and having theological, ecclesiastical and cultural confirmation in the history of the European continent. Europe is considered in its geographic entirety, as a product of two interacting streams of Christianity and two forms of culture that are different, yet profoundly complementing each other.

The Vatican newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano* emphasized that this papal act reflected "a desire for a theologic dialogue between the Catholic and Orthodox churches that was successfully launched in 1980 in order to accomplish a complete merger of the two fraternal churches in the same spirit of serving the Gospel and the people that guided Saints Cyril and Methodius".[1]

Late in January, 1981, *L'Osservatore Romano* carried an interview with Eleuterio Fortino, member of the Secretariat for Christian Unification (Secrétariat pour l'Unité des Chrétiens), concerning a dialogue between the Catholic and the Orthodox Churches. The article mentioned, in particular, that recently ties have continued to develop between Catholicism and all Orthodox churches at different levels and in various forms.[2] Thus in 1980, leaders of several independent Orthodox churches: Russian, Georgian, Constantinopole and others, visited Rome.

The Catholic and Russian Orthodox Churches held their

[1] *L'Osservatore Romano,* 2 January 1981.
[2] *Ibid.,* 27 January 1981.

fifth dialogue session in Odessa in March 1980. A Vatican delegation headed by Cardinal Willebrands visited the Constantinople Patriarchate in November of the same year.

After the revival of the Vatican's relations with separate Orthodox churches and following several years of preparatory work by two commissions (one Orthodox and one Catholic), a joint commission held a session on the island of Patmos in late May 1980, to discuss theological problems. The commission then continued its work in Rome. This was the beginning of a new phase in relations between the Catholic and Orthodox churches. It can be called a new phase because since that time the dialogue has involved the Orthodox Church as a whole, all the Orthodox churches being represented in the joint commission, which is assigned the task of studying theological aspects of the split in order to find a basis for agreement on all the disputed issues between the followers of Catholicism and Orthodoxy.

The desire to establish a dialogue and unity of action extends beyond relationships between different schools of religion. Contacts between different religions have lately become more frequent in order to avoid reciprocal denunciations and bickering, as occurred before, causing embarrassment to each of them. Notable in this regard was the address made by Pope Jonn Paul II in Mainz (FRG) on November 17, 1980, at a meeting with the local Jewish community. The Pope made an earnest plea for a dialoque between Jewish and Catholic believers.

The policy of cooperation between different Christian churches and Judaism, Islam and other religions is being vigorously pursued today at different levels, both within national limits and on an international scale. Thus, an Islamic-Judaic-Christian colloquium was held in France in June 1980, with representatives of these religions from different European, African and Asian countries participating. The purpose was to find factors common to and capable of uniting the three religious systems regardless of doctrinal differences.

The modernization policies conducted by churches under pressure from the renovated religious consciousness of the

masses, new socio-political sentiments and demands voiced by large numbers of believers require, as was mentioned earlier, a differentiated approach in analysis. Depending on the subject in question, on the area affected by renovation (theology proper, religion, policy, international affairs), the new phenomena acquire a different meaning and their social consequences vary.

The causes of the modernistic processes going on in different churches and their consequences have recently come under dialectical-materialist analysis. They have been thoroughly examined by foreign and Soviet Marxist researchers who base their work on the solid experience of the scientific analysis of evolution in different religious systems accumulated by Marxist social science. Engels, for example, made a most interesting analysis of the changing forms of religion in his work *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy.* He presented a convincing picture of how religion had been reshaping and adapting itself to the contemporary epoch over centuries along with the development of social conditions. When the world empire emerging in the ancient world came up with an ideological requirement for a world religion, Roman Gods, "patterned to suit only the narrow confines of the city of Rome", gave way to Christianity. But Christianity has not always been the same. Through the period of feudalism, the social content of its entire philosophy, dogmata and ethical concepts did nothing but sanction and glorify the feudal way of life and its political and ideological fundamentals as a divine blessing. Engels goes on to discuss the bourgeois nature of the Reformation, its specifics in different countries and distinctive activities of church reformers in any given historical conditions.

Although representatives of different churches and religious organizations use different argumentation to justify their modernistic intents, they all try, in Lenin's words, "...to revive religion, increase the demand for religion, invent religion, inoculate the people with religion or strengthen the hold of religion on them in new forms."[1]

[1] V. I. Lenin, "The Faction of Supporters of Otzovism and God-Building", *Collected Works,* Vol. 16, 1974, p. 44.

In a number of works written at the turn of the century Lenin analyzed this kind of conformism practiced by ecclesiastics. In the article "Classes and Parties in Their Attitude to Religion and the Church" (1909), he wrote about the efforts of the Russian bourgeoisie to strengthen religion, its hold on the masses, by means of replacing excessively crude, obsolete, hackneyed, goal-defeating methods with more refined and sophisticated ones. The desire of "cultured" capital to have a religion that would be able to hold its positions, including backward workers, and especially lower middle classes and peasants, made it necessary to "go about it in a more clever, more artful, more ingenious way".[1]

Even today, the methods of analyzing religious renovation used by the founders of Marxism-Leninism, their application of materialist dialectics in the study of new processes in the sphere of religion, help approach the process of religious modernization objectively and scientifically. The specifics of the contemporary religious modernization process, naturally, introduce many new aspects and problems requiring a new theoretical and political understanding.

It should be noted here that today it is not enough to demonstrate (even using contemporary facts) the dependence of the religious form of consciousness on the social and economic relations in existence. Of increasing importance are peculiar aspects in the evolution of religious ideology, a problem that has not yet been thoroughly studied. This ideology, possessing a larger measure of independence than other forms of consciousness, is more conservative and is much more dependent in its development on its own history. Consider, for example, the fact that its evolution occurs amidst existing dogmas, within the notions and categories of the orthodox dogma that receive modified interpretations today. Quite a number of concepts and views become modified as a result. Science, for example, is no longer considered by religious modernists to rival the "divine", while the world, formerly characterized as sinful, is now depict-

[1] V. I. Lenin, "Classes and Parties in Their Attitude to Religion and the Church", *Collected Works,* Vol. 15, p. 420.

ed as a marvel; man, formerly said to be a wicked sinner, is today given utmost respect. Likewise, whereas subservience was once considered the believer's prime virtue, now vigorous activity, responsibility to the community and to the future generations are admired.

A few decades ago socialism was rejected by all religions, both Eastern and Western, as a society of sinners. All sorts of retribution were invoked against Communists and their sympathizers. Today, however, many ecclesiastics of Islamic, Christian, Buddhist, Judaic and other denominations hold dialogues and even cooperate with socialists. In short, new realities are modifying the content of religious concepts and, correspondingly, altering the practices of religious organizations. Therefore, the analysis of religious concepts, interrelation of its "old" and "new" components, their specific impact on the social behavior of the believer, on mass movements, is an important link in the understanding of contemporary religious modernism. Indeed, turning to Catholicism and analyzing any of the 16 documents passed by the 2nd Vatican Council as well as other church documents adopted later, one cannot find anything that formally contradicts the traditional dogma, despite their quite modernistic appearance. Similarly, ideological interpretations used by leftist Moslem activists to explain their new approach to different spheres of personal and social life incorporate traditional concepts and views of Islam. Even when the traditional and modernistic coexist eclectically, all kinds of arguments are involved in order to create an impression of the "immutability" of the "eternal dogmas" of Islam, Catholicism, etc.

The nature of reformatory tendencies existing in modern religions both in questions of international politics and in the field of theological science, social doctrine, cult and organization can be expounded and understood only in relation to the revolutionary socio-political changes occurring in this century—the revolution in science and technology, emergence of the world socialist system, aggravation of the general crisis of capitalism. The key to a comprehensive understanding of the current religious modernism is in the nature of modern social being, in the frame of mind, aspirations and worries of man

today, in socio-political problems, which, of course, appear in different perspectives in bourgeois society, in newly-freed and developing countries and in socialist countries.

A dialectical-materialist analysis of the modernization of religion has never been a purpose in itself for Marxists. Communist and workers' parties functioning in areas populated with a high percentage of believers must study new processes in the sphere of religion and Church, above all, in order to be able to determine their political position. Marxists-Leninists are giving all due attention to the role of the religious factor in politics and in the workers', general democratic and national liberation movements. This has been repeatedly affirmed in the documents passed by international Conferences of Communist and Workers' Parties. Thus, the Declaration of European Communist and Workers' Parties approved by the conference in Karlovy Vary points out: "New trends are emerging in Christian circles as regards problems of progress and peace."[1] The Declaration contains a special appeal to "...the Christian forces, Catholics and Protestants, believers of all denominations, whose striving for peace and social justice is motivated by religious conviction".[2] Similar ideas have been expressed many times by Communists in Latin America, Asia and other regions of the planet.

In these circumstances, the developments underway in all religious organizations, the form and meaning of their "renovation" are of great political and theoretical interest.

On the Causes of Increased Activity of the Church in Different Parts of the World

The dialectic of social development in the modern world triggers a motley jigsaw puzzle of trends, often contradictory and even incompatible.

Inside bourgeois society, these can be seen in the sphere

[1] *World Marxist Review,* No. 6, 1967, p. 5.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

of economy (monopolies and competition), politics (fascism and a shift of the masses to the left), culture, realm of consciousness (cosmopolitanism and the development of national self-consciousness), etc. Contradictions are likewise present in the problem of religion in the modern world, which is the subject of our study.

Indeed, there is clear evidence today that a trend is leading toward the disintegration of traditional forms of worship, crises in religious organizations and alienation of more and more people from religion and the Church, both in bourgeois and, especially, in socialist countries.

Meanwhile, considering, for example, the non-socialist part of the world, a different trend is clearly evident. There are factors there that stand in active opposition to secularization. It is not only a matter of the leaders of the church and sectarian organizations trying to strengthen the position of religion and attract more followers by means of "renovating" or refining the interpretation of basic dogmas and cult modernization. There is also a revival of religious belief among certain population strata and the origination of new kinds of worships, ranging from openly fanatical (like the worshipers of Satan in the USA) to intellectually mystical cults and sects.

And finally, there are vast regions where the religious factor in mass movements has assumed quite significant dimensions. This can be seen among nations carrying on their national liberation struggle, i.e., in developing countries.

To understand the causes and scope of the above-mentioned phenomena one must apply a concrete and discriminating analysis, taking into account the specifics of the region, the degree to which the contradictions of the imperialist system manifest themselves, the measure of scientific and technological progress, the maturity of liberation movements, etc.

As for bourgeois countries, a fairly high level of scientific and technological development there does not at all indicate that religion will lose much of its authority. And this is not surprising. Anything different could be expected only from the perspective of technological determinism, which identifies the development of all social components with progress in science

and technology. Such methodology is alien to Marxist-Leninist historical philosophy. When criticizing this fallacious concept, Marxists consistently expound upon the reasons why proponents of technological determinism should ignore the role of bourgeois relations of production that generate social antagonism, no matter how high the development of the productive forces.

An analysis of the destinies of religion amidst a vigorous development of science and technology within modern capitalism must be approached from all sides, comprehensively, taking into account the general qualitative characteristics of the system. The Marxist-Leninist theory, in fact, regards religion as a result of a "self-severed earthly basis", as a natural product of the conditions existing in antagonistic society housing the deep social roots of religion. Today this society, with all its organic vices, such as unemployment, suppressed rights and freedoms of the workers, alienation of the individual, burgeoning crime rate, etc., breeds, in mass, moods of despondency and uncertainty, an inward need in people for religious consolation. The "delusive world" shapes man's outlook after its own fashion, since, according to Marx, "Religion is the general theory of that world, its encyclopaedic compendium, its logic in a popular form, its spiritualistic *point d'honneur,* its enthusiasm, its moral sanction, its solemn complement, its universal source of consolation and justification."[1]

The traditional social roots of religion in bourgeois society, thoroughly expounded upon by Marxist-Leninist theory, have recently been augmented by an extreme aggravation of socio-economic contradictions within the system of imperialism and by the threat of nuclear war with immense human casualties, the danger of an ecological crisis, spiritual impoverishment of society which acts to drain man's personality, etc. It is precisely these questions that are being brought into focus by ecclesiastics of all denominations. Thus, at a reception for the participants at the international congress for canonic law on October 13, 1980, Pope John Paul II specifically noted the

[1] Karl Marx, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works,* Vol. 3, p. 174.

role of religion and the Church in solving the global problems facing mankind today and stated that man's reason and purely human institutions alone could not cope with them. According to the Pope, Man's future is threatened, and there is an ever growing risk for him to be annihilated by "matter and hardware", therefore, the spiritual, the religious is becoming more necessary.[1] Much has been written in the West about the feeling of fear, desperation and frustration caused by scientific and technological progress, the tremendous stress and alienation that force people to seek ways of salvation from this "mad, mad, mad world", etc. Hence, people who live in an atmosphere of spreading crime, drug abuse, pornography and other vices of modern bourgeois civilization have a natural desire to find a psychological outlet, consolation and moral support in religious organizations.

A recently conducted Gallup Poll offers some interesting information. While noting an increased gravitation toward religion among certain groups of the population, the poll points to the following trends in the report "Religion in America in 1984": people have become clearly more active in search of some spiritual support in their lives; there is a growing conviction in the USA that it is religion, rather than science, that can provide answers to human problems; many Americans have more trust in the Church than in other basic social institutions.

Some similar phenomena were described in an article by the clergyman Ernesto Balducci, published in the daily *L'Unità* in April 1981, under the catchy heading "The Return of the Gods". Contributing to the discussion on the subject of "The Apocalyptic Situation and Religious Movements", Balducci reveals how instability, a sense of danger and rejection of the so-called modern industrial civilization have revived among certain population brackets, including youth, religious sentiments, which can manifest themselves in a variety of forms.[2] The article states, in part, that many preferred to call themselves monks at a forum organized by the leaders of the international students movement in the USA. In doing so they acted on the premise

[1] *L'Osservatore Romano,* 13-14 October 1980.
[2] *L'Unità,* 8 April 1981.

that a real monk is a man who asserts by his entire life, acts and words that this world rests on principles of falsehoods and lies, and that one must look for a better world.

In censuring the repressive character of the "industrial civilization" and questioning its values, the preachers of the "new world outlook" think of themselves as misunderstood prophets, as people differing from others, even as insane people. They declare, echoing Marcuse's ideas, that if Western society is a sick society, then each so-called normal individual is sick, too, because his physical health is not matched by his mental health.

They see salvation in breaking down the official "prison walls" within which the person is caught in the world of insane illusions which he mistakenly believes to be the real world. One should break down these obstacles, these "concrete walls", and make his way at the cost of producing chaos, death and insanity, for the "hidden God" is on the other side of the walls. The truly wholesome spirit must dissolve, destroy the normal "ego" identified with insane social reality. This is precisely the process that tends to revive the traditional imagery of religious myths in renovated forms: to die in order to live a true life.

It is a figurative and fairly pictorial explanation of the reasons why people wish to escape from bourgeois civilization into a realm of religious illusions, why monastery-type seclusion is looked upon as the only road to salvation, the only way to refute the existing ideology and culture, to deny official values, accepted interrelations among people, relationships between society and the individual, etc.

The author points to these circumstances as preconditions for the "return of the Gods" whose images could be concealed in the sanctuary of the subconscious. Naturally, this does not mean that the "new monks" are going to give up their usual way of life, run away from the city to settle in rural communities or follow the practices of Oriental ascetics. Escapism from this world occurs in the realm of the spiritual as a means of "emigrating" from the critical zone of bourgeois society.

When speaking about the attraction of religion for certain population brackets, it is important to keep in mind that now and then religion speculates on quite real human problems,

although the means and methods it offers for their solution are illusory.

In this connection, let us consider the address made by John Paul II in Turin on April 13, 1980. The Pope spoke of the terror of death. This terror, the Pope pointed out, is justified, it has a psychological rationale behind it, including man's desire to live. This desire and expectation of man is met and resolved by Christianity, which promises the blessing of resurrection by the example of Christ.[1]

The myth of the resurrection of the crucified Christ, as an alternative to man's fear of death, as a victory over that fear is, of course, an illusory cause for satisfaction or rejoicing. However, religion creates a semblance of a solution for such complicated problems encountered by man, and certain segments of the population accept it.

It is not incidental that scholars who are religiously biased are trying to resolve such issues as the meaning of life, immortality and death on their own. They call upon the Church to keep worldly problems in the background and to concentrate its attention on the main issue—how to persuade the man to make God the sole reason for existence.[2]

The fact that the achievements of modern civilization in capitalist society, which create favorable conditions for the development of secularization processes and atheistic views, simultaneously providing a basis for the reproduction of religious views, are explained by the contradictions and specifics of the bourgeois system itself and the peculiarities of antagonistic mode of production. Fully applicable today are Engels's words that "...in existing bourgeois society men are dominated by the economic conditions created by themselves, by the means of production which they themselves have produced, as if by an alien force. The actual basis of the religious reflective activity therefore continues to exist, and with it the religious reflection itself."[3]

1 *L'Osservatore Romano,* 14-15 April 1980.
2 J. Duquesne, *Op. cit.,* pp. 289-90.
3 Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring,* Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975, p. 362.

It is important to stress here that the needs of men who are suffering from economic, social, legal and cultural deprivations found in illusory kinds of consciousness are utilized and exploited in every possible way by both religious professionals and the ruling circles of society. The latter do everything in their power to channel people's intellectual, emotional and psychological aspirations as they see fit, to curb them to ensure that the foundations of capitalist society are safe.

Ruling circles in bourgeois society land their support to religion in different forms: financial, economic, socio-political, moral and psychological. Thus, official bourgeois propaganda is incessantly trying to inject public consciousness with stereotypes suiting its own purpose, but in effect, profoundly antidemocratic. For example, each believer is to be a "model family man", "possess a positive personality", be "loyal", etc. The result is that believers and non-believers are placed in artificial opposition to each other, while atheists are characterized as second-rate, disloyal citizens. Social and legal sanctions are used toward the same purpose (religious oath in court, preference for believers in employment, etc.). Things have gone so far in the USA for example that right-wing religious leaders are trying to create a notion that, if a man is not a Christian, he is not even ... American. Advocates for civil rights, peace fighters and participants in other general democratic movements cannot, in their opinion, be considered Christians.[1]

Close ties between the ruling classes in capitalist society and traditional religious teachings often seem to be creating a situation today where newly generated religious requirements must be met beyond those teachings. This explains the search for new forms of religion that differ from the traditional religious organizations which have compromized themselves both morally and politically. They are abundantly represented in literature, but we will examine only one here.

In his study of the modern crisis of traditional religion, the Spanish philosopher J. Arangurén analyzes the trend toward different forms of non-institutionalized religion developing in

[1] See: D. Maguire, *The New Subversives. Anti-Americanism of the Religious Right,* N.Y.C., 1982, p. 11.

his country. He associates this trend with people's disillusionment with industrial society, a society "of mass consumption". The result, Arangurén writes, is that there appear whole groups of population which do not wish to adapt themselves to modern realities and reject them so matter-of-factly that they do not even consider it worth while to combat them... Those forms of religion require a way of life based on dissociation from "developed" society.[1]

Although the author does not probe deep into the causes of these phenomena, he is correct in noting the fact that different varieties of non-institutionalized religion are coming into existence. This is true not for Western Europe alone.

The modern religious structure in the USA with its boom for various new cults, sects, mystic religious organizations (which, in the postwar years alone, according to published estimates, numbered about 20 million followers) is a telling example. Members, as a rule, are recruited from people alienated by the American way of life, victims of social and racial inequality, old people without means of subsistence, sick people without required help, outcasts from the middle class, etc.

Intelligence services and all kinds of political adventurists in capitalist countries play upon people's hardships and social instability. R. Ikor, who studies sects in modern bourgeois society, concludes that cults combine mysticism, politics and money. Thus, when describing the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity headed by the Reverend Sun Myung Moon of South Korea, Ikor describes the organization as pseudo-Christianity intermixed with Oriental worships. Politically, vehement anti-communism has been used here from the very start, while the strings of the sect are pulled by the CIA.[2]

Radical elements (especially youth) are also enthusiastic about new cults. They are sharply critical of the existing way of life, racism, militarism, violation of bourgeois-democratic rights and freedoms, etc. It is they who bear the heaviest brunt

[1] J. Arangurén, *La crisis del catolicismo,* Madrid, 1970, p. 106.
[2] R. Ikor, *La tête du poisson. Les sectes: un mal du civilisation,* Paris, 1983, p. 38.

of persecutions and reprisals, and therefore, have to hide from the authorities. As a result, they frequently fall victims to religious fanaticism. Such a situation led to the deaths of 914 members of Jim Jones' People's Temple community in the Guyana jungle in 1978.

It is not surprising that the underlying causes of this tragedy are not addressed by the bourgeois media, which blamed everything on the "diabolical" character of Jones and his desire to dominate people, or described it as a voluntary group action taken by frenzied religious fanatics.[1] The source of the tragedy is thus left undisclosed, its principal culprit being American bourgeois society.

One must rely on a concrete dialectical-materialistic analysis of how religion and the Church increase their activities to be able to understand the ramifications of this process in different regions of the world. With regard to the increasing influence of Islam on political processes in some Asian and African countries, one must take into account the historical, economic and political factors peculiar to those countries. Quite a sizable part of the world is involved here: Muslims (their population in the world totals over 0.5 billion) inhabit more than 50 countries where they constitute the bulk of the population. In many of those countries Islam is named the state religion.

A significant rise in the national liberation movement in postwar years, the disintegration of the world colonial system, the formation of new young states and their rapid development would have been unthinkable without social awakening and a gradual involvement of the masses in historical activities.

Since religion was (and remains) the only form of mass social consciousness there, in this area of the world, the people cannot express their national and social expectations and goals in any other form than religion. At this given stage of their development, they cannot even understand their requirements and goals in other ideological terms, let alone formulate them.

Speaking about the tradition of presenting the purely tem-

[1] M. Dem, *Jim Jones le démon de Guyana,* Paris, 1979.

poral aspirations of the masses in religious wrapping, one must allow for the dogmatic and organizational characteristics of Islam (some were mentioned earlier) that enable religion to control and regulate all forms of personal and civil activities of Muslim worshipers.

The process of decolonization and formation of independent nations was linked to Islam's increased role in the political life of some former colonial countries, all the more so because the colonial oppressors (soldiers, colonial administration, entrepreneurs, merchants), who had incited general hatred over many decades, represented foreign religions. Therefore, the call for national independence and freedom from the colonizers was naturally paralleled by an appeal to indigenous religious traditions and norms that were to counter those of the foreigners.

The trend for appealing to national religious traditions is also nourished by several new social developments. Studies indicate that the advance of capitalism in Asia and Africa is characterized by alienation of vast population masses from means of production without their appropriate involvement in the new capitalist system of production. This results in an aggravated demographic situation, burgeoning urban population, increased poverty and an insecure middle class. The disruption of traditional work and life conditions leads to instability or even deterioration of the economic situation of large segments of the population. That, too, provides room for greater religious activity.

A certain measure of interest for Islamic "values" is stimulated by the fact that the deteriorating conditions are associated in the minds of the masses with the hardships caused by the Western, capitalist, way of life, with the departure from their own Muslim traditions.

The absence in these countries of meaningful secularization movements made it possible to blame almost all the hardships and deprivations on heterodox believers, foreign or, more precisely, Western innovations. In developed capitalist countries, such movements are known to have been headed by the young, progressive bourgeoisie who were active opponents of feudalism and the religious ideology that stood behind it. The national

bourgeoisie in Muslim countries, however, was faced with colonialism and thus had to bring broad popular masses into the struggle by relying on religious concepts since they were what the masses understood best. Hence, the bourgeoisie used religion to disguise its own political and social program demands.

The social factors facilitating the increasing influence of Islamic organizations on the foreign and domestic policies of some countries in Asia and Africa are often misinterpreted by the bourgeois mass media. They mistakenly describe the current rise in the national liberation movements as a process of "re-Islamization", that is, return to Islam, not just as religion but as the foundation of the state and social system.[1]

The above-mentioned factors that have resulted in the strengthened position of Islam and its increased prestige among the populations of some Asian and African countries, lead to rather ambiguous social and ideological consequences. And indeed, along with an objective growth in the membership of anti-imperialist movements and intensification of the national liberation movement (this being of primary importance today), right-wing Muslim leaders are using the idea of "Islamic community" against proletarian internationalism, against a class approach to the solution of the tasks of national liberation and social emancipation; they are trying to oppose these ideas to scientific socialism.

[1] G. Manousakis, *Islam und die NATO,* Munich, 1980.

Chapter II

MODERN CLERICALISM: IDEOLOGY AND POLITICS

The ruling classes of antagonistic societies persistently try to openly or covertly use religion to promote their own social and political ends. At present, this tendency can be observed with respect to vital issues: the ideology and politics of world socialism, the foundations of the bourgeois system, democratic movements, global problems of today, etc.

The reactionary political activities of right-wing clergymen have already been dealt with in detail in Marxist literature. Here, we shall concentrate on some of the features of modern clericalism and aspects of cooperation between its right-wing and imperialist groupings.

Features of Clerical Anti-Communism

The pro-bourgeois leanings of reactionary clergymen, who promulgate bourgeois ideas cloked as religion, reveal strong anti-communist sentiment.

Anti-communists, including prominent members of various religious organizations, have long used religion to help obtain their goals. Back in the mid-19th century, in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Marx and Engels branded the papacy as the sworn enemy of communism which has entered into a holy alliance with all the Powers of old Europe to exorcise its spectre. Since that time communism has made rapid progress, but right-wing leaders of various religious organizations continue to try to suppress it.

In the practice of some churches, persecution of communism at times assumes a global character. Pope Leo XIII, Pope Pius XI and Pope Pius XII, who reigned from the late 19th to the first half of the 20th century and who were known for their anti-democratic and anti-communist public speeches, issued several hundred documents describing communism as a "deadly ulcer" afflicting the brain of human society (Leo XIII), as a wicked doctrine allegedly rejecting sublime spiritual values and hostile to man and civilization. Pope Pius XI proclaimed communism the most criminal of all doctrines ever evolved by man, one that employed just and attractive ideas to disguise its "Satanic" intent.

At present, anti-communist slanders spread by reactionary clergymen have become one of the more common means of struggle against progressive forces. Clerical anti-communism operates in a variety of forms, including outwardly respectable "scientific" criticism of the theory and practice of communism. However, its most primitive forms are also among the most widely used. The clerical media sends forth hysterical appeals to "save" the faith, homeland and family from the horrible cancer of communism, which are calculated to impress the backward peasant masses. A classic example of such rabid anti-communist action was offered by Portugal. On August 10, 1975, addressing a crowd of 30,000 Catholics in the town of Braga, Archbishop Francisco Maria da Silva described Communists as vicious enemies of all moral values and opposed communism to such values as respect for one's ancestors, love for one's family, children, motherland and traditions and rejection of violence. Similar speeches were made by other Portuguese militant clergymen. (Archbishop da Silva, by the way, was a faithful servant of the Salazar regime and composed a eulogy upon the dictator's death.)

Attacks against progressive reforms in Portugal and attempts to split the democratic forces and slander and isolate Communists were undertaken by many church hierarchs. The most malicious slander was used: parish bulletins read that "in the communist countries, elderly people who are no longer able to take part in productive labour are eliminated"; "in the communist countries, women are common property", etc. Members

of the clergy have been known to openly interfere in political life. During the elections to Portugal's National Assembly held on April 25, 1975, the episcopate urged electors to cast their votes only for those parties whose ideological principles, goals and policies conformed to the concepts of Christianity. Today, too, right-wing members of the episcopate in Portugal use pastoral letters to warn their flock against assisting the revolutionary democratic process, since it would, allegedly, destroy the fundamental structures and institutions and lead to "historical regression, impoverishment of civilization" and the loss of what has been gained over "ages of wisdom".

The reactionary nature of clerical anti-communism is particularly conspicuous in the vigorous resistance of its advocates to social emancipation of peoples who seek to shake off the fetters of capitalist and neocolonialist oppression. Using the slogan of defence against communism as a guise, they are totally indiscriminate in the use of means to check the advance of peoples along the road of democracy and socialism.

After the liberation of South Vietnam, public security agencies uncovered a counter-revolutionary plot in Saigon. The press reported that the conspirators, who used the Vinh Son Catholic Church as their base, had contacts with the CIA.

A statement released by the National Liberation Front and the People's Revolutionary Committee of Saigon read that the conspirators had conducted vigorous subversive activities against the state. They had at their disposal armaments, radio communication means, printing presses for counterfeiting money and forged documents.

Similar activities on the part of the right-wing clergy can also be seen in African countries which have chosen the path of democratic change.

In Angola, the Church resorted to hackneyed anti-socialist devices, including myths about persecution of religion under socialism, in order to impede revolutionary reforms in the People's Republic of Angola, and continued to support the previous regime of exploitation which the people had abolished in the course of their persistent struggle for freedom and independence.

Late in 1976, *Jornal de Angola* reported that the MPLA, which had been instrumental in securing major victories for the people of Angola, adhered to materialist doctrines. But, the paper continued, contrary to what bourgeois propaganda asserted, this did not mean that religion was banned in the country. The MPLA only expected the clergy to cease its attempts to undermine the revolution and restrict its activities to religious matters.

In Zimbabwe, the Church also engaged in pro-bourgeois counter-revolutionary activities aimed at consolidating colonialism. The country's progressive forces justifiably criticized this activity. Speaking at the national university in September 1980, Zimbabwe's President Canaan Banana called on clergymen to renounce the heritage of the colonialist past and a paternalistic attitude in performing their functions, and to do what they could to promote social reform.

Vigorous anti-communist activity is carried out by a number of Protestant organisations in newly-free developing countries. In Zambia, they have exerted pressure on the government to abandon its present course toward social progress. In an open letter published in the press in the autumn of 1979 and distributed in the parishes, the church leadership urged the people to reject the Marxist doctrine in order to prevent "the disappearance of freedom". The letter sharply criticised the government for its communist leanings, as well as some of Zambia's youth movements which, it maintained, were used to ideologically brainwash the young people into adopting the principles of scientific socialism.

Mounting horror upon horror, vilifying communism, "warning" the believers that should Zambia follow a Marxist-Leninist political course, the freedoms proclaimed by the Constitution would be endangered, the letter urged the people to resolutely oppose government policies.

Replying to these slanderous allegations, *The Times of Zambia*, the official organ of the ruling United National Independence Party, wrote that the Party followed the course of Marxism-Leninism in pursuance of the advantages offered by this system.

At times the overt anti-communist activities of a number of Protestant organizations pose a great threat. In the USA, for instance, a group of Protestant churches united around the National Council of the Churches of Christ went so far as to accuse that government organizations and other churches were being lenient towards communism and even taking part in a "communist conspiracy". Asserting that "fear of real war has been aroused by communist propaganda", in 1970 Presbyterian leaders launched a "march for victory in Vietnam" to Washington, and in 1975 addressed President Ford, urging him to drop an atomic bomb on Hanoi to "save" South Vietnam.

In short, social reaction is striving to use right-wing religious organizations in order to save decaying anti-popular regimes and impede revolutionary changes.

At times, persecution of communism under the guise of religion assumes utterly unexpected forms. Here is a characteristic statement by head of the Church of Christian Freedom in Chicago: As in the days of old in the wild West, we shall hold a Bible in one hand, and a rifle in the other. This sect recruited "missionaries" from all over the United States for a "crusade against communism in Rhodesia", with particular preference for the Green Berets who perpetrated atrocities in Vietnam.

As a result, the 13,000 mercenaries in Rhodesia received a reinforcement of another 300 men disguised as "missionaries". However, their contribution proved insufficient to save the anti-popular colonial regime.

In the industrially developed capitalist countries as well, right-wing clerical forces have joined in the campaign against communism in order to check the advancing revolutionary process and democratization of society. Of special interest is the situation in Italy, specifically, Rome, where Vatican City, the world Catholic centre, is located.

The Italian Communist Party, which enjoys widespread support in the country, has recently managed to further build up its influence. In a number of big cities, including Rome, Communists have won and been able to keep up a position of importance. This irritates the Vatican, which directly intervenes

into Italy's domestic political life. On the eve of the municipal elections of 1976, Ugo Poletti, then cardinal vicar, tried to throw a scare into the believers stating that if the Communists won, a clash between the "city of God" and the "godless city" would ensue. There were also allegations that the Communists would seek reprisals against the Church in its "world spiritual capital". Believers were forbidden to cooperate with Communists, and there were lengthy discussions of the incompatibility of religion and communism. A conference of the Italian episcopate issued a statement to this effect in mid-December 1975. Seeking to prevent the Communists from scoring a success at the elections, the episcopate declared that Marxists do not recognise fundamental values, are unworthy of trust and inevitably lead to other forms of slavery. In May 1976, Cardinal Antonio Poma, chairman of the conference of the Italian episcopate, threatened the Catholics who decided to stand for elections to Parliament as independent candidates in the lists of the Communist Party with excommunication. Such blatant interference of the clergy into the public life of Italy and its capital (incidentally, at that time they were powerless to prevent the left-wing groupings from winning the municipal elections in Rome) provoked justifiable indignation among the democratic forces. *L'Unità*, the Italian communist newspaper, branded the ideas proposed by the conference of Italian bishops "backward and anachronistic", and the statement itself, as "an attack against freedom of choice and the Catholics' political independence".[1]

The political life of Italy has known many other occasions when the Catholic Church interfered in election campaigns. Speaking at the ceremony of the appointment of new cardinals in May 1976, Pope Paul VI denounced those who, in his opinion, restricted the work of the Church to political actions, using ways and methods contrary to divine revelation, as well as those who proposed a fusion of two irreconcilable worlds. The press and radio immediately interpreted this statement as directed against those Catholics who cooperated with Marxist

[1] *L'Unità*, 17 December 1978.

movements, specifically, Communists. Subsequently, Catholic Church leaders repeatedly voiced their disapproval of those representatives of Italy's Catholic movement who sought to join forces with the country's progressive sections to promote true democracy and social progress. The Vatican's disapproval was incurred by the decision of a group of Italian Catholics to stand for elections to Parliament as independent candidates in the lists of the Communist Party.

Interference of the Catholic Church into election campaigns has been going on for years in the FRG as well. There, the Catholic Church invariably supports right-wing conservative groups headed by the CDP/CSU leader Franz-Josef Strauss. At the 1980 elections, a pastoral letter was forwarded to all Catholic parishes in West Germany with a special note for the clergymen enjoining them to expound its contents during services. Some of its points coincided, literally, with the election slogans of the CDP/CSU bloc. Church organizations also rendered support to the Christian-Democratic Party and its candidates during the elections held in the following years.

It is a known fact that West German Catholic leadership has much in common with the parties of big capital. However, the Church's direct, unceremonious interference into the political struggle on the eve of the elections is all the more strange since a few years previously the Church itself declared the principle of non-interference into the election campaign.

And yet, the impact of today's realities has forced even religious anti-communists to change their tune. Though continuing to act on the side of the more conservative bourgeois forces and denouncing the theory and practice of socialism, church leaders have often been compelled to update and refine their anti-communist views.

Of considerable interest is the session of the Spanish episcopate's plenary assembly, which, in the spring of 1976, reviewed the bishops' replies to questions about capitalism and socialism. With reference to the former, the bishops, true to the spirit of bourgeois reformism, admitted that the distribution of wealth should be subject to constant control so as to prevent the people from becoming slaves of the economic factors

of life. As far as Marxist socialism was concerned, no curses and anathemas were uttered. Compelled to accept the existence of Marxist groups in nearly all dioceses, the session noted that Marxist socialism is surrounded with a mythical halo of sorts which produces a "moral conflict" in many Catholics from among the worker stratum. The episcopate, the session's communique stated, recognise socialism as a "legal phenomenon" on condition that it concentrate on the spiritual aspect of the individual and give up the theory of class struggle, atheism and non-recognition of private property. These reservations sound rather ludicrous, but what is significant is that the attitude towards communism and Communists in Spain is apparently undergoing certain changes.

To a large extent the brunt of the clergy's anti-communist activities in a particular country depends on the political situation there. For a number of reasons, which will be dealt with later, official leaders of Latin American churches have recently felt compelled to stress that they found both "capitalist liberalism" and "Marxist collectivism" equally unacceptable. One of the documents adopted by the episcopal conference in Bolivia rejects both these concepts as leaning towards absolutism and denouncing religious values.

A similar stand has been adopted by the Protestant and Catholic Churches in a number of African countries, where religious leadership maintains close contacts with international Christian centres and tends to reproduce their social and political opinions. This has been reflected in a statement issued by Zambia's Protestant and Catholic churches in Lusaka in August 1979.

Religious anti-communism has many facets and does not limit itself to just reactionary political activities. The most typical feature of modern clerical propaganda is rejection of the principles of scientific socialism combined with mock-objective criticism of individual aspects of the capitalist way of life. Realising that the primitive forms of struggle against communism (such as urges to save the faith and civilization from a barbarian invasion) and maligning the USSR (where believers are alleged to be deprived of the right to bring up their children)

are failing to achieve the desired results, some religious figures seek to give anti-communism a semblance of objectivity and substantiate it. In a number of countries, appeals have been made to abandon "negative anti-communism" and explain the "errors" of Marxism-Leninism to the common people.

Many of Pope Paul VI's speeches dealt with the theme of overcoming communism by persuading its sympathizers to change their views. The Pontiff made use of any occasion to criticize the Marxist concept of man, history and the world, "warn" against the errors and dangers of communism, and describe socialism as a base, inhuman system. Such were the views he expressed in his speech on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the Rerum novarum encyclical (May 15, 1971), during his pilgrimage to the altar of the Fatima Virgin in Portugal, his trip to the eucharistic Congress in Bogota (Columbia), in a number of audiences and in letters and written and oral statements. Generally the Pope described socialist society as forbidding freedom of worship and infringing upon the rights of the individual.

The present head of the Vatican also regularly launches verbal attacks against socialism. In the summer of 1983, during his pilgrimage to Lourdes (France), Pope John Paul II repeated some of the phrases commonly used to discredit socialism, including "violation of freedom in the socialist countries" and "reprisals against the faith".

Together with primitive and crude methods used to dissuade believers from joining the democratic and especially class liberation movements, subtle methods, scientific-sounding arguments, and "objective" remarks and half-truths are also employed to serve the same end; the theory of scientific communism is described as degenerate and fallacious. Characteristically, in the spring of 1983, when the world marked the centenary of Karl Marx's death, *L'Osservatore Romano*, the Vatican's official paper, printed an article entitled, "Centenary of Karl Marx's Death", which, although conceding that "Marx's thought has undoubtedly made a significant contribution to the emancipation from many historical injustices", also asserted that "history itself has undertaken the mission of exposing

the utopian character of Marx's doctrine".[1]

Assertions concerning the individual's "subordinate position" in the theory and practice of scientific communism and that its champions inevitably turn into immoral men have always been spouted by the religious mass media. A special essay "Man and Marxism" printed by the official Vatican went to unprecedented lengths stating that according to Marxist thinking "man as such is non-existent", and that the doctrine is characterized by "moral indifference", social evil and totalitarianism.[2]

A stubborn wish to frighten believers (and not only believers) away from progressive movements based on scientific theories can be traced in many of Pope John Paul II's speeches. The Pontiff persistently represents the materialist, communist world outlook as vulgar, imperfect and hampering the development of the individual and society. In recent years, during his visits to Latin America, Asia and Africa John Paul II has repeatedly warned his audiences against materialist views which are alleged to "obstruct true progress"and are even a "source of degradation to mankind".

That the Pope would choose these particular regions of the world to slander the Marxist doctrine is by no means accidental. At present, Marxist-Leninist ideology is winning recognition in the developing countries, some of which have chosen the socialist path. Religious leaders in Africa and Asia are trying to impede this natural process and discredit scientific materialist views in the eyes of the people who are awakening to conscious activity.

The above-mentioned speeches of Pope John Paul II directed against scientific materialist views have a characteristic feature: all philosophic materialist trends are accused of vulgar materialism, rejection of spiritual values, pursuit of consumer benefits and sensual pleasures. In other words, the same substitution of concepts which Marx and Engels criticised in their time is noted. In his work *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical*

[1] *L'Osservatore Romano*, 14 March 1983.
[2] *Ibid.*, 29 February 1980.

German Philosophy Engels spoke out against lack of discrimination between materialism as a general world outlook based on a certain understanding of the relationship between matter and spirit, and the specific forms in which this world outlook has been expressed at particular historical stages, especially in its vulgar form in which it existed in the minds of natural scientists and physicians and was popularised in the 1850s by such "vagabond preachers" as Büchner, Vogt and Moleschott.

Marx and Engels launched a scathing attack against the indiscriminate use of the concept "materialism". "By the word materialism," wrote Engels, "the Philistine understands gluttony, cupidity, avarice, covetousness, profit-hunting and stock-exchange swindling—in short, all the filthy vices in which he himself indulges in private."[1]

Even now, many religious leaders take care to shape their criticism of existing negative social phenomena and human vices in such a way that they appear to belong exclusively to the theory and practice of scientific communism.

All these ideological devices, adapted to meet the requirements of the present situation, were employed by Pope John Paul II in his speeches delivered in Africa. In Brazzaville, he stated: "There are many obstacles in the way of the advance of the human spirit, and not least of these is materialism, ideological and practical".[2] In Nairobi, the Pontiff observed that "an atheistic ideology cannot be the moving and guiding force for advancing the well-being of individuals or for promoting social justice when it deprives man of his God-given freedom, his spiritual inspiration and the power to love his fellowmen adequately".[3] In Yamoussoukro (Côte d'Ivoire), addressing university students and young people in general, the Pope stressed the idea that "materialism is a source of degradation to mankind and of enslavement of life and society."[4]

[1] Frederick Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy* in: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, p. 353.
[2] *L'Osservatore Romano,* 5-6 May 1980.
[3] *Ibid.,* 8 May 1980.
[4] *Ibid.,* 12-13 May 1980.

Obviously, such ideas concerning atheism and a scientific materialist world outlook do not contain a grain of truth, and the method used to misrepresent their essence is basically the same as that exposed by Engels back in the 19th century.

A motley picture emerges when we analyse the attitudes to communism displayed by various religious organizations. Apart from the trends mentioned above, other religious anti-communist doctrines also form part of the pattern.

An increasing number of books about religion are published in the West which contain a fairly matter-of-fact approach and "objective", "scientific" comparative analysis of the Marxist-Leninist and religious world outlooks.

It is no accident that the Vatican has recently been stressing the need to study Marxism in theological schools and colleges. A few years ago, the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Believers even distributed a lengthy paper which stated, in part, that the training in theological colleges should include—and this is a matter of great urgency—as extensive and accurate information about Marxism as possible.

Such information, the paper read further on, must not only give accurate knowledge about the teaching of the founders of Marxism—Marx and Engels—but also about its roots in the philosophical system of Hegel and especially Feuerbach. This information must also trace the changes in this teaching, which is of great importance for the present. The paper recommended to study Marxism-Leninism as the theoretical foundation of all communist movements as well as various revisionist trends; it also emphasized the need for deeper knowledge of non-Marxist movements, such as Althusser's structuralist Marxism, the Frankfurt school and Marcuse's system, which serve as a source of inspiration for some youth movements (the so-called New Left).

After the fashion of secular bourgeois ideologists, theologians of various schools often attempt to revive the idea that Marxism has borrowed a number of concepts from Christian ideology.

Let us review an essay with the expressive title—"Apocalypse et marxisme", published by a Protestant newspaper in Geneva.

It analysed the direct, so to speak, impact of Judaist and Christian theology on the scientific ideology of the proletariat. It made use of superficial analogies and far-fetched comparisons to reveal the "mythological" roots of Marxism. Marx's "plagiarism" is supposed to consist of his "wide use of Messianic ideas". In the final analysis, the concept of the proletariat's world historic liberatory mission turns out to stem from soteriology (a branch of theology dealing with salvation); the Marxist theory of the class struggle—from religious and mythical ideas about the confrontation of good and evil, Christ and the Antichrist; and eschatological hopes—to be embodied in the future classless society in which everyone will receive according to his needs and which will therefore have neither misery nor tears.[1] Well, a lively imagination makes it possible to endlessly draw such parallels, but it cannot provide them with scientific substantiation. However, for Christian authors, the search for "plagiarism" is not an end in itself. Their goal is to prove, as the essay under discussion attempts, that the Marxist secularist interpretation has deprived Christian ideas of their lofty meaning. The authors of the article believe that atheism and the reduction of universal sin to economic issues are the two main sources of the "impotence" of Judaist and Christian ideas as they exist in the Marxist system.

A curious regularity leaps to the eye: how far religious leaders are prepared to go when conceding Marxism any positive elements to a large extent depends on the situation in the particular country. A number of documents adopted by various churches over recent years, especially in the countries where democratic and liberation movements are making progress, are more coherent on the merits of the Marxist doctrine. A special document entitled "Marxism, Humanism and Christianity", drawn up by Zambia's Protestant and Catholic churches, mentiones favorably, among other things, Marx's critique of the pro-bourgeois stand to which the Christian churches adhered "in the past", their "silence" about the working people's desperate position (again "in the past") and the part Marxist

[1] *Le Protestant,* Geneva, 15 October 1980.

critique has played in the emancipation from exploitation of a large part of mankind. Even criticism of religion is recognised as legitimate, but only of that sort which in the past was a caricature of the faith.[1]

New tendencies are expressed in the essay "Christianity and Marxist Analysis" by Pedro Arrupe, former General of the Society of Jesus. The article was printed in the spring of 1981 by a Jesuit magazine in Milan, and a great deal of work had gone into its preparation, including consultations with Jesuit experts in Marxism, with Jean-Ives Calvez, the well-known French specialist on Marx, among them.

The principal problem dealt with in the document was formulated as follows: can a Christian, a Jesuit, accept Marxist analysis, naturally, excepting the Marxist ideological and philosophical views and corresponding practices? The author considered it extremely important to settle this issue since in a number of regions in Latin America and Europe, many religious leaders have been influenced by Marxist thought. For instance, clergymen who deal with the working class in these countries help solve their parishioners' daily problems within the Marxist tradition.

The article also contains an unprecedented (for this sort of writing) admission that the views of the Church on a number of modern social problems coincide with Marxist analysis. Among these, Arrupe singled out the decisive significance of the economic factor and the structure of property in the life of society, the role of exploitation in the advance of the class struggle, and the increasing importance of the ideological concepts and theories which voice specific class interests.

Readers were, however, warned against immediate holesale accepting the Marxist doctrine. This, the author lamented, often happens due to the external similarity between Marxist and evangelical views, both of which are supposed to help improve the lot of the poor.

Of interest are Arrupe's ideas on whether a clergyman, or a religious person in general, can accept the social concept of

[1] *La Documentation catholique,* 5 October 1980, p. 889.

Marxism ignoring its philosophy, ideology and politics. The majority of Christians who lean towards Marxism, Arrupe maintains, tend to reduce the doctrine to historical materialism. The author opposes turning the economic factor into a fetish, believing that this detracts from the essence of religion, makes faith in God futile, turns an unselfish attitude into greed and defies Christian hope.

Touching on the Marxist theory of the class struggle, whose treatment is also one-sided, Arrupe wrote that the Church recognises the existence of social conflicts and antagonisms, but cannot accept the view that the class struggle is the main motive force of human history. According to Arrupe, Marxists fail to realise the importance of other factors propelling history, including solidarity, peace and love. Besides, since Marx's teaching on the class struggle goes beyond the boundaries of mere analysis, assuming the significance of a strategy, a programme of action, Arrupe deemed it necessary to point out that although Christianity recognises the legitimacy of struggle as such and does not reject the possibility of a revolution in exceptional cases (when no other means against tyranny present itself), still it cannot agree that struggle is the best way to put an end to struggle. By and large, the Church gives preference to other ways of changing society, e.g., persuasion and conciliation.

Naturally enough, the author specifically stresses the fact that Marxist analysis contains concepts which the Church rejects point blank. However, he terms it a delusion to believe that there are no points of contact between elements of Marxist analysis and the Christian tradition.

A natural outcome of Arrupe's reasoning is the conclusion that due to the above-mentioned factors, as well as to the obvious connection between Marxist philosophy, ideology and practice, Marxist analysis as a whole is unacceptable to the Church. Coming from the leader of the Society of Jesus, this opinion is hardly surprising. However, what is striking is Arrupe's fairly tolerant attitude to Marxism and a wish to grasp the reason for its popularity among masses of believers, and even to find points of contact between Marxist and Christian analysis. As a result, he advocates a dialogue with Marxists warning

that one should not be overzealous in criticizing Marxism when it comes to ways of remedying injustice and championing the cause of the downtrodden.

This is a new feature in the approach of some prominent church leaders in bourgeois countries to Marxism, and it requires careful analysis. At the same time, it is obvious that this sort of approach, which calls for an "objective" study of Marxist theory, invariably leads to an oversimplified and vulgarized interpretation of the Marxist-Leninist treatment of problems of the individual and society, alienation and humanism, social progress and freedom. In this context, it is a matter of urgent necessity to scientifically deal with these issues, and to find well-thought-out arguments to criticize the most up-to-date methods of the ideological struggle being waged by various religious trends against the theory and practice of scientific communism.

Islam and Judaism in Reactionary Politics

Right-wing Moslem leaders consistently attack socialism and distort its essence and practices in their religious, and social and political activities. Over decades, they have been instilling the spirit of anti-communism in the followers of Islam, who, as is known, live fairly close together in the vast region stretching from the Atlantic coast of northern Africa to Indonesia and the Philippines, as well as in some other areas, including developed capitalist countries.

This is the objective towards which all these countries' mass media and various Islamic congresses, conferences, etc. are working. In late 1964, Mogadishu hosted the VI World Moslem Conference. Some of the anti-communist appeals that sounded there were addressed to the "Moslems of Turkestan, who are victims of neocolonialism." The anti-communist trend was particularly apparent at the Congress of the Afro-Asian Islamic Organization in Bandung (1970). Communism was criticized as an anti-religious doctrine and socialist countries for

their "reprisals" against Moslems at the international conference of Islamic youth held in Tripoli in 1973, as well as at the International Congress in 1976.

Sessions of the Congress (which attracted over 170 Moslems and experts in Islam from 25 countries, including a number from the West) considered proposals to establish a special fund for propagating Islam and to mark Friday instead of Sunday as a holiday. There was a theological debate on the appropriateness of applause as a sign of approval, or whether the true believers should reserve it to extol the glory of Allah. But there were also attempts to use the Congress for purposes which had nothing in common with theology. While it was in session, the *Morning News*, a Karachi newspaper, featured a lengthy article by "a member of the Turkish delegation" which heaped abuse on Marxism and the socialist countries under the pretext of "defending Islam".

Right-wing Moslem leaders are particularly adamant in asserting that it is impossible and even unnatural for a Moslem to be a follower of socialism. Sometimes this is simply stated as an axiom, a self-evident truth: in December 1976, a symposium held in Malaysia, The Malay Political Leadership, stated categorically that communism and socialism are unsuitable for the Malays as they are founded on materialism and, consequently, contradict the principles of Islam. At times, this idea is shrouded in obtuse social and theological verbiage, which is essentially nothing more than false demagogical propaganda, a heap of untruths intended for backward masses of believers ignorant of international politics. To disclose the true nature of this anti-Soviet and anti-communist nonsense which is being spread to "defend Islam from communism", here is an excerpt from an editorial published in late 1976 in the *Edict* newspaper of Saudi Arabia. The article stated, in part, that their contradictions with Russia are a reflection of the contradictions in views advocated by the countries. The ideology and actions of the communist regime go against the Islamic shariat, while the actions of Russia are in direct opposition to the interests of mankind, for they are directed at converting all peoples and all nations to the communist faith. With this end in view, Russia encourages godlessness,

immorality and disdain for moral and social values, which is essentially direct interference into the internal affairs of different countries and peoples, and goes against the universally recognised principles and rights of these peoples to live in conditions of complete independence and sovereignty. Further on, the authors of the editorial proceeded to liken the peaceful foreign policy of the USSR, which is a staunch friend and ally of Arab peoples, to Israel's expansionist course, all of which goes to show that they do not only completely ignore the real state of affairs but also engage in deliberate anti-communist propaganda in an attempt to arouse hostility towards socialist society among the uninformed masses.

But the most striking example of the use of religion for reactionary political purposes and against social progress is probably furnished by the present situation in and around Afghanistan.

The popular democratic revolution which was victorious in that country in April 1978 paved the way for overcoming medieval feudal and clerical oppression and building a new life within a historically short period. But the young republic immediately encountered grave difficulties.

Soon after the victory of the revolution, conditions improved throughout the country. But as these changes became consolidated in the republic the forces of imperialism and reaction, which hated to see the Afghans choose the path of progress, launched a vicious campaign against the country. For a number of years, an undeclared war is being waged against the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, a war inspired and organised by American imperialism and other reactionary quarters.

Failing to achieve their counter-revolutionary goals, world reaction, including right-wing clerical circles, have attempted to fan anti-Soviet sentiment by using fabrications and slander about the events in Afghanistan and the USSR's relations with that country. These reactionary elements would like the world to believe that the national democratic revolution in the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan is "hostile to Islam", even though many believers and the patriotic-minded clergy there support the new system. To justify the blatant interference of

imperialism and its henchmen into the country's internal affairs, international reactionary propaganda is doing its best to capitalize on the myth about the "Soviet threat", spreading rumours about the "godless regime" which is allegedly seeking to "abolish Islam in Afghanistan" and asserting that the present government of democratic Afghanistan is surviving only thanks to "Soviet bayonets".

An active role in the massive and many-faceted campaign against the popular regime in Afghanistan is played by reactionary Islamic leaders, as well as former feudal lords, moneylenders and reactionary representatives of the tribal nobility who have been stripped of the privileges they used to enjoy and are now living in countries bordering on Afghanistan.

Secular and clerical reactionaries display guile and treachery. They base their political machinations on exploiting the believers' religious sentiments and do not stop at defilement of Moslem objects of worship. In the summer of 1980, a group of counter-revolutionaries attempted to blow up the Khazrat Ali Cathedral Mosque in the town of Mazar-i-Sharif. The bandits were caught by the people's militiamen in the act of placing explosives in the mosque.

When questioned, they stated that the purpose of their action was to lay the blame for the destruction of one of Afghanistan's most famous mosques on local authorities, thus provoking dissatisfaction with the government among the Moslem population. Thus, millions of Afghans saw once again how the green banner of Islam was used to serve counter-revolution, disguising intentions which have nothing in common with defending the interests of the Moslems, but are directed instead at obstructing the building of a new life in democratic Afghanistan.

Another fact is indicative. The names of nearly all counter-revolutionary groupings in Afghanistan include the word Islamic: The Islamic Party of Afghanistan, the Movement of the Islamic Revolution, etc. This is how reactionary policies which are aimed at undermining a new society "in a Moslem region" are masked and the people's attention diverted from the real danger posed by political bandits prepared to use fire

and sword to regain their social and economic provileges. This truth is becoming increasingly more apparent to the Moslems of Afghanistan who resolutely support the people's government of the DRA.

Afghanistan is not the only country where imperialism is making advances to the Moslem population and playing a political game involving religious feeling. Nearly all countries of the Moslem East are affected by this policy in some way. In this region, all counter-revolutionary anti-popular movements sponsored by imperialism and local reactionary elements are said to be aimed at "defending" the Moslem countries from the "communist peril". One reason why this tactic is used is that imperialists wish to gloss over the extreme differences existing between the imperialist states and the developing countries against the background of a mounting democratic and national liberation struggle in Asia and Africa.

In the past few years, especially after the events in Iran and Afghanistan, US ruling circles have gone out of their way to build up their reputation as "defenders of Islam" and faithful friends of the developing countries, above all in the Near and Middle East.

In actual fact, the United States is only lavish with support and money when the recipient is a reactionary group in a state with a predominantly Moslem population, and its real objective is to suppress the anti-imperialist movements developing there. Moreover, having unleashed a hysterical campaign against the countries which have chosen a progressive, anti-imperialist way of development, Washington has concentrated air and naval forces in the Persian Gulf, posing a threat to the security of the independent states of this large region, thus showing its "defence of Islam" for what it is.

Using traditional imperialist tactics, the US ruling circles are trying to fan up national and religious hostility, rally the reactionary forces under anti-communist slogans, channel the feelings of Moslems in an anti-Soviet direction and sow dissent between the peoples of the developing states and their true friends, including the Soviet Union and the other countries of the socialist community.

For the most part these provocative activities have failed. The Moslem peoples are getting a clearer idea of the real intentions of imperialism, and of the internationalist essence of the Soviet Union's political course.

Imperialism, which would like to exploit the natural resources of Moslem countries, has launched a vociferous political campaign of defending Moslems against "godless communism" for this purpose. It is the rich oil deposits that have made the USA bring its navy to the Persian Gulf and hastily set up its rapid deployment force in order to be able to interfere into the internal affairs of developing states and continue the imperialist plunder of the region's natural wealth.

In their large-scale campaign aimed at discrediting the theory and practice of communism, right-wing Moslem leaders have particularly tried to distort the position of Islam in the socialist world.

A few years ago, the informed public in the developing world was stirred to indignation by a provocative work entitled "The Soviet Union and Islam", which contained information grossly distorting the position of Moslems in the USSR and the national policy of the Soviet state. In the years that followed, reactionary quarters continued to circulate printed matter of this sort, seeking to undermine the friendly relations between developing and socialist countries and discredit the principles and achievements of socialism. Proceeding from the assumption that "Islam is a great, all-embracing, universal religion", which "explains life and the universe, covers all spheres of life and answers all questions of science", certain Moslem leaders sought to map out a "third way" of development—the so-called "Islamic socialism". Opposing their doctrine to real socialism, the ideologists of Islam hope to conceal from the people in the developing countries that cooperation with the countries of real socialism would promote their advance along the road of social progress.

Playing on the believers' religious sentiment is an occupation that right-wing Judaist leaders are also very good at. Judaism has long played a prominent part in the political machinations of Zionists.

Zionism is a reactionary ideology representing the interests of the Jewish bourgeoisie which has close contacts with the monopolist circles of imperialist states. It is widely used in the global strategy of imperialism directed against the socialist community, the international communist and working-class movement and the people's national liberation struggle.

According to Zionism Judaism is a doctrine preaching an arrogant and disdainful attitude to other nations. Jews as the "chosen people" is the main subject of school curricula in Israel and the main content of religious sermons. Israel's aggression against the Arab peoples is portrayed as a "patriotic war", and UN Security Council resolutions obliging Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories are termed "humiliating and unfair". Israel's claims are based on a rather dubious argument, i.e., that all of Palestine has from time immemorial belonged to Israel. Here, Biblical definition of Palestine is implied, the territory which, apart from today's Israel, also embraces Jordan and the Gaza strip. This provides religious and ideological prerequisites for the lunatic Zionist project which envisages the establishment of "Great Israel from the Nile to the Euphrates". Neither does the matter remain restricted to the ideological sphere.

Fanatics belonging to religious Zionist parties have formed the core of various reactionary organizations, including, for instance, Gush Emunim (the Bloc of Believers), the strike force of Israeli expansionists in the occupied west bank of the River Jordan. Under the protection of the Israeli army, Gush Emunim bandits storm Palestinian towns and villages, killing and maiming civilians.

A mixture of fascist-cum-religious ideology is the creed of Herut, an extreme right-wing Zionist party. Back in the 1930s, Herut set up military-type youth groups known as *betar*. Later, *betar* members formed the core of the terrorist organization which displayed particular cruelty towards the Arabs and "made a name for itself" by eliminating the population of the village of Deir Jassin in Palestine. Incidentally, Meir Kahane, the founder of the notorious Jewish Defense League, was once a member of *betar*. This pro-fascist organi-

zation was set up by US Zionists in 1968. Under the pretext of "defending Jews", Zionist gangs broke into the headquarters of the Communist Party and other progressive organizations in the USA. However, the chief purpose of the Jewish Defense League is to participate in the vicious anti-Soviet campaign. Shots fired at the USSR permanent mission at the United Nations, explosions in the offices of Soviet organizations in the USA, provocations against Soviet theatrical companies touring the United States—this is the criminal trace left by the Jewish Defense League. At present, Meir Kahane is a member of the Israeli Parliament, the Knesset, and is engaged in intimidating and terrorizing those in Israel who advocate reconciliation with the Arabs.

Over the decades, the Zionist organizations, which have a powerful propaganda apparatus at their disposal, have been trying to exploit religious sentiment in order to brainwash the believers into bourgeois nationalism, anti-communism and anti-Sovietism.

A special place in Zionist propaganda has been allotted to spreading fabrications about the Jews' "unhappy" position in the USSR, infringement of their rights, and even the need to save them "from the threat of genocide". Martti Larni, a Finnish author who joined a group of tourists attracted by the offer of an Israeli travel agency "to follow in Christ's steps", described one of the methods used by Zionists to exploit believers' religious sentiment for anti-Soviet purposes.

Among other things, the writer described curious monthly night gatherings held in the synagogues of Tel Aviv and known as "meetings of enlightenment". At first glance, Martti Larni wrote, it seemed that a purely religious ritual was in progress. Experts on the Old Testament explained the miracles described in the text to those who expressed an interest. Films were shown which glorified the Holy Land with journeys back into Biblical history.

However, the real purpose of the night "meetings of enlightenment" was to build up the faith of the newly arrived immigrants in the principles of Zionism. This mission was assigned to so-called "witnesses" whose names are not disclosed.

For those present at the meeting, they are "brothers" and "sisters" whom God has saved from hell-fire and will give happiness in the Holy Land.

Here is a speech by a certain Brother Mihai which Larni happened to hear.

"I had to overcome grave doubt lodged in my heart," Mihai droned on in a sing-song voice, "before I finally resolved to come to Israel. The Old Testament has shown me the light. In the town where I was born, Jews were persecuted, and 15,000 were killed. God has saved me. Now I have managed to leave the Soviet Union and can attest to my faith before you..."

Needless to say, neither brother Mihai nor the local press which printed his "confession" mentioned the source of the reprisals against the Jews to which he referred. This omission is deliberately made in the hope that the ignorant will blame Soviet authorities for such acts of genocide. But it is common knowledge that the mass elimination of Jews in the Soviet Union in 1941-44 was the deed of German fascists, who, incidentally, also believed themselves to be the "chosen race".[1]

Controlling every aspect of Israel's public and political life, Zionists are pursuing a policy which is prejudicial to the national interests of the country and the Jewish working people and directed against the Arab national liberation movement, the socialist countries, the world communist movement and all those who wish to promote social progress. This has prompted the people holding advanced views, including Jews, to expose the reactionary imperialist course of Zionism, which is seeking to screen its real intentions behind innocent-sounding religious terminology.

An analysis of clerical policies and ideology clearly reveals that anti-communist and anti-Soviet views are upheld by right-wing leaders of many religious organizations, all of whom use similar methods and devices.

A strident anti-communist and anti-Soviet campaign is being also conducted by an evangelical organization called the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade. Another participant in this

[1] See: *Literary Gazette,* 31 January 1973 (in Russian).

movement is the Russian Orthodox Church abroad, which from time to time circulates false reports about the "persecution" of believers in the Soviet Union, the Soviet authorities' plans to "eradicate" religion, etc.

Feeling nostalgic about the monarchy swept away by the October Socialist Revolution, this Church has organized a number of provocative campaigns. In November 1981, in the state of New York, it staged a show canonizing the last Russian tsar, Nicholas II, and other "victims" of the revolution.

Another device used by reactionary clericals is distribution of pamphlets supposedly printed in the USSR which have an overtly provocative nature. Publications of this sort (*Is the Koran to Be Believed?, The Koran: the Dogma and the Doctrine* and such like) have for a number of years been circulated in Moslem countries. Persons engaged in these subversive activities are hoping in this way to fan anti-Soviet sentiments in countries with a Moslem population and undermine the cooperation and friendship uniting the socialist countries with developing states of Asia and Africa.

A survey of recently staged clerical propaganda actions prompts the conclusions that in the world today, when democratic forces are striving towards resurrecting and consolidating detente, establishing broad international cooperation and developing mutually advantageous relations between countries with different socio-political systems, when the prestige of the USSR and the socialist community as a whole has been steadily growing, reactionary imperialist circles (which spare no effort to justify their policy and vilify the theory and practice of real socialism) are making wider use of political speculations involving religious issues.

As a rule, declaring that their anti-socialist activities are directed against scientific atheism, they nevertheless concentrate not on the polemic involving philosophical issues but on criticizing the social and state system which has been voluntarily chosen by the citizens of the socialist countries, believers and non-believers alike. Incidentally, there are also non-socialist states whose ruling parties (for instance, right-wing socialists) maintain atheist views. Why then do ideologists of right-wing

clericalism manage to curb their wrath when it comes to these countries? Probably because they fall within the capitalist orbit. But if this is the case, is it not clear that the clericals are drawing the line of demarcation not between outlooks but between socio-political systems? As far as religion is concerned, its role is merely that of a smoke-screen.

The Alliance of Right-Wing Clericals and Imperialist Reaction

The tentacles of reactionary clericalism are stretching out into a variety of fields. At times, it is even used by imperialist special services for intelligence and subversive purposes. The bourgeois press frequently discloses unseemly facts pertaining to activities of ministers of religion belonging to different denominations.

For example, the US ruling circles were scandalized by the admission of a group of American missionaries in Bolivia in the summer of 1976 that the CIA used missionaries for collecting information. Eleven persons were named who, according to the statement, became CIA agents in Bolivia.

Evidence that missionaries have been used in this way in Asia, too, was furnished by events in Northeast India, where anti-government separatist revolts regularly flared up. The world press has cited facts tracing these outbreaks to the attempts of imperialism and reaction to pressure the Indian government into abandoning a progressive foreign-political course. American Christian missionaries operating in India's northeastern states participated in the campaign. The Delhi weekly *Link* described the missionaries as being some of the most active agents of the Central Intelligence Agency and stated that mission schools had in effect become training centers for the US intelligence service. The "preachers of the Gospel", the journal said, were engaged in vigorous subversive activity in the northeastern regions, hoping to whip up separatist senti-

ments and destabilize the situation in the country as a whole.[1]

Immediately after the Second World War, when India was to gain independence, the American missionaries' principal area of operations was the strategically important and politically unstable territory at the junction of India's frontiers with those of China and Burma and inhabited by the Naga and other tribes. By this time the missionaries had already succeeded in converting a good part of the local population to Christianity, specifically, the Baptist denomination, inasmuch as most of the missionaries were American Baptists.

On the eve of India's independence, which was proclaimed in August 1947, the American missionaries incited the tribesmen to revolt with the object of severing the region from India and proclaiming it the "first Christian state" in Southern Asia. Soon afterwards, bands of separatists "baptized" by the American missionaries embarked on wide-scale armed action in Nagaland. They were appropriately called for a long time "forest Baptists".

The mid-1960s witnessed a succession of revelations concerning the overseas missionaries' subversive activities, as a result of which many were expelled from the country.

Ambitious plans for India were nurtured by the missionary Li Rose, a Chinese American. According to the Indian newspaper *People's Democracy*, he is the author of the notorious plan to create a "Himalayan Federation". To begin with, the puppet state was to take in Nepal, Bhutan and the Indian state of Sikkim, and was later to be extended to other parts of India inhabited by "nationalities converted to Christianity". *People's Democracy* wrote that American missionaries served as chaplains in special camps where the separatists were doing military training.

The religious fanaticism of right-wing Sikh groups, which enjoy the powerful support of international imperialist circles, is being used to destabilize the situation in India in the hope of severing Punjab from the rest of the country. The assassination of Indira Gandhi was another link in the chain of sub-

[1] See: *The New Times*, No. 37, 1980, p. 22.

versive actions staged by internal and international reaction.

After the Shah regime was overthrown in Iran, the world received access to information about the way the intelligence services of Western states utilized religious organisations. It was documentally proved that the Andische Catholic school in Teheran had been a spy center. Missionaries working there were faithful servants of Western special services and the Israeli intelligence; a search of the premises turned up films of military installations and maps showing their locations.

The CIA in particular flooded Iran with "missionaries". The Teheran *Kayhan* has made public the text of a confidential letter found by the "guardians of the Islamic Revolution" in the office of the Anglican Bishop in Isfahan. In it a certain Colonel Milton D. Sullivan thanks the addressee, a clergyman named Khalil Razmara, for political and aviation maps, aerial photographs of airfields and bases of the Iranian fliers and microfilms that had been supplied. The purpose of the subversive activities in that country was made clear by Sullivan's remark: "The seeds of civil war had been sown in Iran."[1]

The activities of the so-called Summer Linguistics Institute (SLI) are another example of how religious organizations were used by the CIA. The official purpose of the institute, which was established in 1934, was to learn the languages of tribes with no written language and translate the New Testament into them so as to give these peoples access to Christianity. In 1980, 4,000 SLI missionaries worked in 30 countries of Latin America, Africa, Asia and Oceania. Among other things, they were engaged in intelligence. Dozens of reports about the subversive nature of their work were drawn up by specially established government commissions in Mexico, Peru, Brazil, Venezuela, Columbia and other Latin American states.

Acting on directions from imperialist special services, the SLI helped to rouse the Meo tribe against the liberation army of South Vietnam and to fan up a conflict between the central authority and border tribes in India, Burma and other regional states. In Latin America, the organization is trying to

[1] See: *The New Times*, No. 4, 1981, p. 17.

knock together a similar "fifth column" consisting of Indians. SLI missionaries were turned out of Brazil (1977), Mexico (1980), Ecuador (1981) and some other countries. But they sometimes make their way back under the banners of other church and missionary organizations controlled by the CIA.

In March 1977, the *Bogotano* newspaper of Bogota reported about CIA attempts over a period of several years to plant its agents in left-wing religious organizations in Latin America in order to split and then abolish them.

These plans are spearheaded mostly against so-called rebel priests in Chile, Colombia, Bolivia and other countries. Subversive activities were given a fresh impetus in the 1960s, when some of the young priests began to actively support the struggle of the working people for their rights and national independence. *Bogotano* noted that in 1959, in a report submitted to the US government, the CIA voiced serious concern over the church's new approach to social issues, criticism of imperialism and a more tolerant attitude to communism.

Referring to "CIA reports", the newspaper wrote that the organization planned to prevent attacks against the Church and maintain good relations with the church hierarchy; identify the actions of left-wing priests with those of left-wing extremist groups, claiming them to be agents of international communism and trying to intimidate and discredit them; establish police control over religious communities and progressive church activists; conduct campaigns aimed at undermining the prestige of certain church figures; supply clergymen with propaganda materials and weapons.

The newspaper stated that in Colombia a great deal had been done to put these plans into practice. This is revealed, among other things, by assaults against priests who took part in mass movements.

Reports about collaboration of missionaries with the CIA have become so numerous that the church leadership was forced to interfere in this matter.

In the mid-1970s, the US coalition of Catholic and Protestant missions even came up with an ethical code to try to prevent collaboration of missionaries with the CIA, for, as the

draft stated, activities of this sort undermined the trust existing between missionaries and the peoples who had welcomed them. The leading bodies of various churches in the USA were compelled to expressly forbid missionaries to engage in intelligence work. The United Methodist Church warned its members that missionaries who consciously carried out intelligence work on CIA assignments would be banned from performing missionary functions. David Stowe, Executive Secretary of the United Methodist Church, Division of Foreign Missions, declared that encouragement of such practices by the government had already seriously damaged missionary work abroad. James Wood, head of the United Baptist Committee on International Affairs, admitted that the use of missionaries by the CIA undermined trust in their work and personal qualities.

Reactionary circles in many countries are trying particularly hard to enlist the services of right-wing activists of mass religious organizations in regions where the liberation struggle is gaining momentum. Such is the situation that has recently evolved in Latin America: there, progressive forces come up against a united front of reaction, above all, US imperialism, which has declared Central America a sphere of its "vital interests" and is trying to keep it under its political, economic and military control. But despite all this, democratic forces in some of the region's countries have recently been able to score major victories. Following the Nicaraguan revolution, liberation struggle began in El Salvador. There, the United States is hoping to secure a foothold with the help of right-wing leaders of various religious organizations, including the Christian Democrats.

The present role of the Christian Democrats in the life of Latin American countries is rather controversial, for they express the opinions of different social groups, from big bourgeoisie and landowners to peasants and some sections of workers.

The social and political stand adopted by the left-wing sections of religious organizations will be dealt with later. Here, we should like to concentrate on the anti-popular activities of right-wing representatives of religious organizations and political unions set up on the religious basis, their direct collaboration with imperialism and local reactionary groups.

Assisted by Christian Democrats in El Salvador, local reaction and the US imperialist quarters are trying to stem the growth of the national liberation movement. As the revolutionary struggle in El Salvador is mounting, the USA is offering increasingly overt support for repressive policies. The Reagan Administration has even attempted to persuade the states comprising the Andean Pact to set up and train a special military contingent for invading El Salvador and other countries of the region to squash the national liberation movement. The United States is trying to involve some Christian Democratic leaders in Latin America in this dangerous campaign.

There have been cases when the activities of right-wing Christian Democrats aimed against the democratic movement paved the way for fascist regimes, as happened in Chile in 1973.

Not only the majority of believers but religious leaders, too, are beginning to understand that the anti-popular policies of the Christian Democrats' right wing are unwise and even disastrous. At a theological session held in November 1980 in Mexico City as part of the international Christian conference for a political settlement in El Salvador, representatives of over 80 religious organizations of Latin America, the USA, Canada and a number of European countries condemned the treachery of El Salvador's Christian Democratic Party, which is playing into the hands of national oligarchy and reaction, while Salvadorans are being killed in large numbers.

A meeting on the theme "The Church Arises from the Thick Masses and the Insurgent Struggle in El Salvador" recognized the actual existence of such a new church and levelled criticizm against religious leaders who support exploiters and refuse to recognize the lawful rights of grass-roots Christian communities.

In the same manner, representatives of religious organizations voiced their disapproval of the Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM) for its reactionary stand and enjoined the bishops to support the liberation movement.

However, realistically-minded Christian leaders are opposed by the clerical circles which, being closely linked with ex-

treme rightist groupings of the imperialist bourgeoisie, seek to use the prestige of religion to sanctify the actions and policies of militant reactionaries spearheaded against the cause of peace, democracy and progress.

To attain its anti-popular political goals, imperialism and reaction have been known to stage conflicts between believers of different denominations. A case in point is the bloody clashes between Hindus and Moslems which took place late in 1980 in a number of towns in Northern and North-Western India. Hundreds of people were killed in fighting between Hindus and Sikhs after the assassination of Indira Gandhi by Sikh extremists. Right-wing forces in India have always tried to play on the population's religious sentiment, fan up religious bigotry and use it to promote their own ends. Militarist, chauvinist and fascist-type organizations and extremist Sikh elements share the blame for such clashes.

Reactionary religious circles in India have been shown to maintain close contacts with American and Pakistani special services. The latter seek to sever some Indian territories from the country, weaken its strategic position, divert it from the course of radical socio-economic reform and force it to give up its independent foreign policy.

Naturally, neither reiigion nor the Church, nor, of course, the majority of believers, can be held responsible for the way in which imperialist special services make use of right-wing religious leaders and organizations. Believers themselves, as well as representatives of many churches and religious trends, have been known to oppose the anti-popular activities of right-wing clericalism. It would be wrong to equate the Church with clericalism. In analysing the social and political problems of our day, a differentiated approach is required to assess the views and actions of religious organizations, their leaders and members.

Chapter III

RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIOLOGY: THE OLD AND THE NEW

The philosophical and sociological concepts advanced by any religious system may be far removed from the progress of natural sciences and the life of society and fail to live up to modern intellectual and philosophical standard, but they cannot help being affected by the latter. Our epoch offers an opportunity to witness how a "reassessment of values" in modern religion gives rise to a need for a corresponding philosophical and sociological interpretation. Hence, there is a number of modernist trends in the approach to scientific cognition and the interpretation of the relationship between knowledge and the faith, the potential and functions of human mind, and cultural and technological advances; and there is a modernist approach to issues of sociology, humanism and the social doctrine as a whole.

Features of Modernist Trends in Theological Systems

In any confession of faith and at any time, religious modernism is a complex synthetic phenomenon. This is natural, since, as a rule, religious modernism, which has arisen from the need to adapt the Church and religion to new historical conditions, implies serious changes in all aspects of the activity of church institutions.

The need to overcome the glaring contradictions between antiquated religious traditions and dogmas and the spirit of the new epoch affects, first and foremost, the Church's socio-polit-

ical activities and increases the amount of work falling outside religious boundaries proper. However, modernism also embraces everyday religious consciousness and theology.

The dialectical-materialist methodology of the study of religion is oriented toward revealing the dependence of the evolution of theological systems upon objective social conditions. This is the only approach which allows a truly scientific analysis of the theological aspect of religion. Its soundness is borne out by the long history of religions, including Christianity. Each time a conflict would arise between the actual content of Christian dogmas and altered reality making religion susceptible to criticism, the dogma was updated and supplied with an ideological foundation by theology. Characteristically, the theologians engaged in updating the dogmas which they themselves proclaimed "God-given and eternal" did not stop at giving the creed itself, which had entered into sharp contradiction with mass religious consciousness, an interpretation which was, at least to some extent, in keeping with the new situation and more acceptable to modern mass religious consciousness.

Of course, the greatest difficulty involved in updating theology is the need to find a flexible solution to the following dilemma. To maintain its influence, each religion must popularize its tenets in such a way as to make them comprehensible in the cultural and historical environment in which it exists at any given time. As a result, while the content of the new interpretation of theological systems depends on the cultural and historical situation, they are usually realized and expressed through the means and notions corresponding to the idealistic philosophy of the epoch.

However, the inevitable periodical re-interpretation of the fundamental theological notions and concepts is dangerous to both theology and religion in general. A more or less drastic updating of theology threatens to undermine religion as a whole, cause a rift between modernist theology and religious tradition and deprive it of its specific function, turning it into a variant of secular idealist philosophy. The wish to overcome these "extremes" in the least detrimental manner has produced

the division of theologians into orthodox fundamentalists and liberal modernists. The former staunchly support the existing systems, seeing the continuity of ideological tradition of a given religion as a guarantee of its authority, stability and durability. Pursuing the same ends, the liberals are convinced that due to the deep crisis of religion, everything must be done to adapt it to the new conditions. It should be noted that such fundamental modernization of traditional theological systems sometimes makes it easier for religion to exert an influence upon the masses.

To illustrate this, let us take modern Protestant theology as an example. Protestant theological modernism, which exists in a number of forms, is a reaction of sorts to the neo-orthodox "crisis theology" which was predominant between the early 1920s and late 1950s. Its founder, the Swiss theologian Karl Barth, as well as his followers (E. Brunner, R. Niebuhr, etc.) advocated a policy which could be termed religious isolationism, stressing the other-worldliness of God, the qualitative distinction between the secular and the religious, etc. The neo-orthodox "crisis theology" isolated Christianity from social reality. Viewing theology as an eternal teaching about the divine, which is founded on Biblical revelations perceivable in man's religious experience, the followers of neo-orthodoxy believed that their doctrine could not contradict any cultural and historical reality but only contributed to its more profound perception.

Time has proved, however, that this neo-orthodox doctrine cannot stand up under pressure from such social and ideological factors as the growth of religious indifferentism and atheism, the participation of believers in the revolutionary transformation of society and their greater awareness of personal responsibility for world affairs. Thus Protestant religious modernism, which had taken shape by the early 1960s began to advocate the involvement of God in worldly affairs and his sharing in man's concerns on this earth.

The new trend has called for a substantial modification of theological systems, a revision of the traditional foundations of theology and substantiation of the "worldly" meaning of religion. A new period has begun in the development of theo-

logy which is now substantiating the concepts of the so-called "secular Christianity".

Assessing the situation realistically, the modernists seek to find ways to protect the religious idea in a secular age.

Contributors to this trend were German theologians Rudolf Bultmann and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, English theologians Robert Smith and Bishop J. A. Robinson, American theologians Gabriel Vahanian, Harvey Cox, Thomas Altizer, William Hamilton, Paul Van Buren, etc. A number of Protestant theologians, who have advanced the concept of the "death of God" (a rather sensational one, considering their status), have nevertheless filled it with definitely apologetic content, paradoxical as this may seem. They maintain that contemporary man's lack of faith in God shows only that he is no longer satisfied with either the traditional forms in which the religious idea is expressed, or with official church institutions; the crisis of faith is explained by the inability to convey the divine essence, etc.

Although advancing differing theological and philosophical structures, Protestant modernists invariably propose discarding the traditional Christian idea of a supernatural deity who has created the world and evolving a new concept of the divine which touches the people's lives and is inseparable from their everyday cares and concerns. The traditional Christian virtues—obedience, submissiveness, hope for reward in the other world, etc.—have been replaced by activeness, a sense of social responsibility and protest against an unjust social order.

A number of theologians advocate a search for God in relations between people and the sphere of man's activity; as a result, the supernatural is interpreted in a social and ethical vein, and the idea of God is anthropologized. The theologians working within this trend base their theory on the concept of "unreligious Christianity" advanced by Bonhoeffer several decades ago.

Bonhoeffer's views (specifically, his tenet that there is no special religious sphere outside human relations) continue to serve as a point of departure for the different varieties of secular interpretations of Christianity which attempt to reveal the divine within human activity: in history, society, politics, revo-

lution and culture.

The ideas of American theologian Gabriel Vahanian have recently become quite popular. Vahanian's "death of God" concept rests on the idea of incompatibility between old religious forms and modern culture. In his opinion, failure to grasp the situation that has evolved gives rise to the false notion that faith is dead, while the real point at issue is rejection of a certain image of God and attempts to conjure up an earthly picture of the Kingdom of Heaven. Vahanian is convinced that there is urgent need to abolish the traditional Christian system of symbols and dogmas and dissolve theology into sociology, literature, art and culture as a whole.

Among the theologians supporting the doctrine of anthropological pantheism there are several who champion more radical views, including a new interpretation of the very idea of God, whom they view as a dialectical process, an impersonal spiritual reality developing through permanent self-alienation (Thomas Altizer). This pantheist interpretation of the essence of the transcendental, which is dissolved in the world and in man thus deifying them, at the same time makes it possible to view the divine as a factor determining and directing both man's life and history in general.

The non-religious interpretation of Christianity, or the so-called radical theology, including "theology without God", is usually associated with stressing the human essence of the image of Christ, who is represented as stripped of the features which "died" together with God the Father; he is very down-to-earth, the quintessence of human being. It is this image of Jesus, a Jesus living through man, that is offered by radical theology as an object of faith, while the essence of faith itself is not to fathom God and serve him but to merely be a human being and love one's fellowman.

Virtually all modern Christian theological schools emphasize Christ's earthly qualities and the intransient significance of his role as man's protector. A number of Catholic theologians have even declared that religious consciousness should replace the classical concept of Christ by an updated idea of Jesus. Discussing the recent theological trends, the Catholic theolo-

gian Walter Kasper points to the tendency to strip the historical Jesus of the trappings of the Christian doctrine in order "to again hear his authentic words and discern the human traits of his image". He believes that the whole point of this work is to assert the "significance that Jesus has for us now"[1].

Some Protestant theologians advocate another trend which identifies the transcendental with the cosmic and ontologises the idea of God, giving it an essentially naturalistic interpretation. This is the theological doctrine advanced by Paul Tillich.

In a number of his works, particularly in the three-volume *Systematic Theology*, Tillich gives an original interpretation of the transcendental nature of God, who is simultaneously immanent to the world and transcendental, and the essence of religion (as the inner meaning of man's spiritual life and of culture as a whole). He believes that true theology is "philosophical theology" called upon to rationally revise religious systems and concepts. In this way Tillich tries to eliminate the contradiction and any distinction between the "God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" and the "God of philosophers". As a result, the Christian God emerges as a philosophical absolute, a developing dynamic reality, a way of solving the problems of man's existence, while reason and the faith, philosophy and theology should, according to Tillich, fuse and mutually penetrate one another, being of a complementary character.

Tillich's "philosophical theology" probably provides the best opportunity for clarifying the essence and possible results of theological modernism. Indeed, if brought to their logical conclusion, Tillich's attempts to establish a system of enlightened Christianity would have grave consequences for religion itself: even supplied with religious embellishments, a pantheist idea of God in fact rejects the essence of Christianity.

Theological modernism is fraught with controversy. Giving up certain religious ideas and notions, theologians frequently break away not only from a concrete historical form of reli-

[1] W. Kasper, J. Moltmann, *Jesus ja—Kirche nein?*, Zurich, 1973, pp. 11, 12.

gion but from its very essence. Yet they neither can nor want to engage in self-annihilation of this sort.

Precisely for this reason, the boldest modernist trends, the serious secularization of religious categories cannot but provoke concern on the part of many theologians. In his book *De l'Eglise du Christ*, Jacques Maritain, a distinguished representative of Catholic philosophy, resolutely opposes those reformers who confine the domain of the Church to mundane problems and disregard man's existence in the other world. He urges his colleagues "to put an end to the demythologization of the dogmas and secularization and profanation of Christianity".[1] In his own way, he is logical, for the mounting of secular tendencies in religion must inevitably undermine its foundation.

Similar ideas have been voiced by philosophers and theologians belonging to other religious trends. The foundation of religion is growing vaguer, and rejection of traditional dogmas, religious indifferentism, free-thinking and atheist views are spreading; these are all natural processes, and they find a peculiar reflection in theology. They show that even subtle and refined attempts to save religion by modifying it are useless. In a variety of forms and to different degrees, these processes are at present under way within the framework of all Christian doctrines, as well as of the other religions.

New theological concepts are used to settle the questions of the relationship between science and religion, and to find one's bearings when dealing with the pressing problems of freedom, democracy, social equality, morality, and ecological and international issues. In a number of cases, they provide inspiration to advocates of radical religious protest movements, including the "theology of emancipation", "theology of revolution", "black theology" and other similar trends, which oppose the official Church and the bourgeois system.

Updated theological doctrines are also employed to justify the activity and way of life of the bourgeois strata of society. At times, bourgeois sociology does not even try to disguise

[1] J. Maritain, *De l'Eglise du Christ*, Paris, 1970, p. 414.

the link existing between updated theology and the social needs of the ruling elite of the capitalist world. Let us consider an article printed in the *American Journal of Sociology* which contains a comparative analysis of the relationship between religion and the ideology of management. Its author, J. Alan Winter, set out to show that M. Weber's link between the classical Protestant ethic of the early capitalist period and the bourgeois world outlook, and the affinity of the Protestant concept of predestination and the interests of a capitalist entrepreneur typical of that epoch are now undergoing substantial changes. Modern state-monopoly capitalism differs considerably from the system which Weber has analyzed, since individual enterprise has been ousted by giant corporations, and the capitalism of private entrepreneurs—by the managerial system.

A manager's chief concern is to ensure coordinated action of the various links within a large organization and that different groups of specialists work together and to take into account the social and emotional aspects of human relationships. Today, the manager's success is in fact the success achieved by a group, and, the author stresses, whenever he has managed to succeed, this is not attributed to his unique personal qualities; a man is respected above all as a member of an organization, and what counts is his ability to adapt its objectives to his own. Analyzing the features of managerial activity and contemporary managerial ideology, Winter makes it clear that a manager needs a religion which would justify his loyalty and "would be a belief system for which he could hold as deep and abiding an elective affinity as his predecessor, the entrepreneur, held for the old Calvinist or Protestant ethic. Significantly, there are developments within Protestant theology which can provide the manager with such a belief system. The central feature of these developments, that is, those which may lead to a theology toward which the manager may turn, is the doctrine of the interdependence of men and a loving God in the performance of a common task".[1]

The author proceeds to show that modern doctrines, seeking

[1] *American Journal of Sociology,* Vol. 79, Chicago, 1974, No. 5, p. 1145.

to democratize the concept of God, be it within the framework of secular theology (represented by Harvey Cox, Gabriel Vahanian, and Bishop J. A. Robinson), the "death of God" theology (Thomas Altizer, William Hamilton, Paul Van Buren), or theology of the process (John B. Cobb, Norman Pittenger, Schubert Ogden), consider God and the world as mutually dependent elements. "Within the old Protestant ethic, man is clearly subservient to God. However, within the new theology, God and man are co-equals, mutually dependent upon each other in the performance of a common task."[1] The author's conclusion is straightforward: modernist theological ideas are adapted to the realities of bourgeois society, and, among other things, to the practices of capitalist management. Whether the author is justified in deriving some of the ideas advocated by the theological systems directly from developments in the managerial sphere of bourgeois society is a moot point. What is noteworthy, however, is the author's attempt to reveal the actual moral and social meaning of scholastic and mystical theological systems.

An important aspect of the evolution of theological and philosophical systems is the much greater importance attached to problems posed by the relationship between faith and reason, religion and science. Considering the achievements made in science and technology, this is hardly surprising.

Bearing in mind the popular belief in the power of scientific knowledge, philosophers and theologians working within any religious trend take pains to show their respect for modern scientists at the same time claiming in different ways that it is only through religion that science has been able to fully reap the fruits of its labor.

The essence of the updated attitude to science, culture and other achievements of civilization are apparent in modern Catholic theology and philosophy. Let us consider neo-Thomism, which has over the decades acted as the Catholic Church's official philosophy. Although this philosophical system has a considerable store of pseudo-rationalistic arguments, this

[1] Ibid., p. 1147.

is the field where its weakness, which stems from the irrational, anti-scientific nature of any religious philosophy, is most apparent.

Indeed, proceeding from the Thomist teaching on the possibility of cognizing material objects through human reason and the impossibility of contradictions between faith and reason, the Catholic Church has always believed it has a right to reject any conclusion of experimental sciences which opposes its creed. A science studying final results and the very object of study in any branch of the natural sciences was represented as, at best, a step toward fathoming the divine essence.

Official Papal documents have long proclaimed that contradictions between science and religion are impossible as long as religion has the final say. However, in the second half of the 20th century, the Church was forced to couch this idea in more circumspect terms, no longer overtly threatening to "anathematize" or "ban" science as it had before. Recently, the Catholic Church has sought to provide science with the veneer of "liberal licence" and popularized the idea that a religious framework offers extensive opportunities for scientific research. The fact that the Vatican has established an Academy of Sciences (operating since 1936 in its present state) and a network comprising dozens of universities and other research bodies throughout the world shows that the Church is acting in accordance with the natural desire of any religion to keep up with scientific discoveries and achievements and provide them with a theological interpretation.

In these modern times, religion's essentially obscurantist attitude toward scientific knowledge is mostly reflected in the attempts on the part of church ideologists to interpret the character, purpose and ethical significance of science in such a way as to discredit its role as a world outlook and detract from its social and humanistic importance.

A neo-Thomist theory of the role of individual sciences and the place of philosophy and theology in the overall system of knowledge serves as a weapon in this campaign.

The neo-Thomist gradation of science, philosophy and the divine revelation proceeds from the assumption that science

and philosophy belong to the realm of naturally cognized truths, while faith allows man to fathom the truth which no natural process but only revelation can discover.

This regimentation does not deprive science of the right to discover and establish individual phenomena and facts in any sphere of empirical knowledge; improve the technology of production, develop machinery and equipment; its practical importance in matters of everyday life is also recognized. However, theology denies science, which positively describes facts and empirically studies the material world, the right to make theoretical generalizations and draw philosophical conclusions.

This phenomenological view of science which restricts the domain of scientific cognition to the framework of phenomena, the outer aspect of things, maintains that their essence can be cognized through metaphysics and religion alone. Meeting with a group of Nobel Prize winners on December 22, 1980, Pope John Paul II enlarged on the subject of the dangers and evil consequences of the use of scientific discoveries that had been made by man's genius. According to the Pope, the principal source of these evils, be it in the field of ecology or atomic energy, is glorifying technical and scientific achievements and ignoring the sublime religious and ethical values. "Science alone," said Pope John Paul II, "is incapable of giving a complete answer to the issue of the basic significance of human life and activity. Their significance is revealed when reason, going beyond the physical datum, uses metaphysical methods." Ergo, the dangers of errors made by human reason, when man "is groping in the dark", can be avoided only when he is aided by the light of faith.[1]

At a meeting with scientists and students held on November 15, 1980 Pope John Paul II talked about the need for a closer link between faith and reason. The past conflicts, which, he said, the Church recalled with regret and an understanding of its errors, were declared overcome. At present, faith and reason are each relegated to its own field of cognition, and the autonomy and independence of science and the freedom of

[1] *L'Osservatore Romano,* 22-23 December 1980.

research are recognized. Remaining within its own boundaries, science, generally speaking, cannot stand opposed to faith. While laying a strong emphasis on the need to develop science and technology, which form the foundation of modern culture, Pope John Paul II warned against the belief that science in itself can define the meaning of scientific research and technical achievements and assess their results from the point of view of their humanistic content. This is where faith, which is called upon to guide the actions of scientists, should step in.

Despite the lip service paid to science and those who have made rapid scientific and technological advances possible, the Church still claims that it alone is able to philosophically interpret the achievements of the natural sciences. Exposing such fideistic claims, Lenin wrote: "We will, sirs, surrender science to you, scientists, provided you surrender epistemology, philosophy to us—such is the condition for the cohabitation of the theologians and professors in the 'advanced' capitalist countries."[1]

Trying to prevent science from sharing in the solution of philosophical problems, Catholic theologians proceed from the fact that experimental research is only able to reveal the properties of this, material, sensually cognized world but is totally incapable of making any statement whatsoever concerning supra-sensual (intelligible), metaphysical essences. The latter are the realm of metaphysics, which rests on church dogma.

Neo-Thomism assigns metaphysics (philosophy) the role of the science of sciences. Using general concepts metaphysics delves deep into the nature of things, something that other sciences are supposed to be unable to do. Speaking in October 1965 at the Second Council of Vatican, Bishop Otto Spuelbeck, a neo-Thomist theologian, expounded the idea that the natural sciences cannot contribute to fathoming the metaphysical essence of things, their causes, attributes and ultimate goals. Consequently, a fruitful dialogue is in order between science and metaphysics, so that the latter might reveal the principal truths to science, opening "the road to God" before it.

[1] V. I. Lenin, "The Recent Revolution in Natural Sciences", *Collected Works*, Vol. 14, 1974, p. 280.

Modern fideism fulfils its traditional function of denigrating the objective value and distorting the purpose of scientific knowledge by using subtle and refined methods. It has made a point of embellishing the history of the relationship between science and religion, all the time attempting to restrict the potential of science, which is alleged to be incapable of penetrating the essence of the more important laws of existence, to disseminate the thesis about the drastic difference between science and spiritual values, and to underestimate the revolutionary transforming role of science.

In his book *The Natural-Scientific World Outlook and the Christian Faith* theologian Ernst Föhr states that "the church has no bias against science. It only depreciates the attempt to confine man's cognitive activity to the material sphere and apply it when pursuing purely transitory goals."[1] Föhr cites facts recently discovered by natural sciences, twisting them so as to make them seemingly testify to the existence of God, the possibility of miracles and the truth of the Bible. Miracles are said to be quite understandable in the light of the advances made by modern natural sciences in cognizing the laws of nature which man previously could not fathom and which "were created by the Lord God".[2]

Two tactics are usually employed in the campaign to promote a "marriage" of religion and science, of the Church and culture: falsifications and vindication of militant obscurantist practices, or, whenever this proves impossible, attempts to condemn the past and declare a "new era", the era of harmony and accord between religion and science. In the first instance, the premise is that the Church has always been a patron of science and the arts, while reprisals against thinkers holding advanced views were "vexing accidents" caused by temporary delusions on the part of individual church leaders. This version has been popularized in monographs and articles on religious subjects which have virtually flooded the book markets of the

[1] E. Föhr, *Naturwissenschaftliche Weltsicht und christlicher Glaube. Das moderne Weltbild,* Freiburg, 1976, p. 5.

[2] Ibid., p. 228.

capitalist countries.

However, these devices cannot remove the disgraceful stain on the history of either Christianity or any other religion, which have for ages persecuted science and culture displaying ruthless determination to put an end to the ideological and cultural trends and movements that did not conform to their dogma.

At present, modernistically-minded theologians, who are loath to appear dyed-in-the-wool reactionaries and seek to defend the Church against well-justified charges of obscurantism, are heatedly demanding that the disgraceful reprisals of religion against science and scientists be stopped and appealing to the Church to act in a way that would better accord with modern culture and civilization. In this context, demands of Catholic renewalists to put an end to the "era of Galileo" are noteworthy. At the Second Vatican Council, Bishop Arthur Elchinger even suggested that Galileo himself be rehabilitated.

Obviously, the policy of rejection of the "era of Galileo" embraces a much broader range of issues than the question of the attitude to Galileo as a person.

Even the highest-ranking church hierarchs have taken part in the campaign aimed at dissociating religion from compromising historical facts. In November 1979, at the session of the Vatican Academy of Sciences marking Albert Einstein's birth centenary, Pope John Paul II admitted that church reprisals against Galileo were unjust and a mistake. Mentioning the fact that in 1633 the Inquisition forced Galileo to renounce Copernicus' theory on heliocentric system of the Universe, the Pope lay the blame on those church members and institutions which were unable to appreciate the right of science to autonomy, believing that science and faith are antagonists. Urging theologians and scientists to admit mistakes without bias, no matter who has committed them, the Pope emphasized the need to remove the obstacles standing in the way of fruitful accord between science and faith, between the Church and the world.

Today various religions are careful to promptly respond to all major scientific and technological breakthroughs in order to interpret them in the way suitable to religious doctrine and

declare religion's benevolent attitude toward science. Consider the stand taken by the Roman Catholic Church with respect to one of the greatest achievements of modern science and technology. In a congratulatory statement made on the occasion of the first Soviet manned space flights, Pope John XXIII noted that they carried on that exploration of the Universe which is advocated in the Holy Scriptures and voiced his hope that these feats would assume the significance of a tribute paid by man to God, the supreme Creator and law-giver.

A modified stand of religious institutions with respect to scientific and cultural progress does not, however, signify any changes in the core of their concepts, the blessing given to scientists and the glorifying of scientific and technological advances do not at all mean that religion has renounced its fideistic hegemonist claims. Within the boundaries of orthodox philosophic doctrines (neo-Thomism is a case in point), they have remained unchanged, obscurantist in content if not in form, continuing to discredit religious doctrines in the eyes of a great number of bourgeois intellectuals and hampering large-scale implementation of renewalist ideas. Therefore, the more radical theologians within the modernist trend call for introduction of new theological and philosophical systems promoting the "formation of a religion" that would live up to the standard set by the age of science, and advocate such theological trends that would rest on scientific foundations and take into account recent philosophical and scientific discoveries.

In Catholic philosophy, this school of thought is associated to a large extent with the name of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, an eminent French thinker, geologist and paleonthologist (1881-1955). The chief merit of Teilhard's optimistic and evolutionist system, at least in the opinion of modernist theologians, lies in the substitution of dogmatic medieval concepts, which are completely out of tune with the psychology and intellect of modern man, with religious principles resting on the humanistic ideas and information provided by 20th-century science. These new methods of strengthening faith are believed to be a great deal more effective. "Like a spark that has struck the bush... Father Teilhard's thought has inflamed our minds. It

has brought the fire that we needed."[1]

The debate that developed around Teilhardism in religious and secular bourgeois philosophical literature became particularly heated in the mid-1950s. The official Church strongly opposed the philosophical works of Teilhard, a Jesuit. At different times, beginning with the mid-1920 and until his death, the Church banned his major philosophical works: *Le phénomène humain, Le milieu divin* and *L'énergie humaine.* He was forbidden to teach at colleges and higher educational establishments, disseminate his ideas, and even to speak at the international paleonthological congress. The Vatican Sacred Congregation of the Clergy repeatedly adopted resolutions (1957, 1962) warning against Teilhard's ideas, demanding that his works be withdrawn from libraries of theological schools and other Catholic institutions, and banning their sale in church bookshops and their translation into other languages.

But the bans imposed by angry traditionalists were not in the least effective. Pursuing different ends and interpreting Teilhard's views in a variety of ways, his followers and supporters have set up different societies and committees enlisting the participation of distinguished scientists, political figures; journalists and philosophers. Disseminating Teilhardism, they proceed from the need to renounce one-sided and outdated philosophical doctrines and advocate pluralism in philosophy. In the 1970s this trend began to enjoy a certain appreciation and even support among the Vatican leadership. A number of curious ideas were to be found in the message sent by Pope Paul VI to the head of the Dominican Order on the occasion of the 700th anniversary of the death of Thomas Aquinas (1974). Along with the traditional eulogizing of his teaching and recommendations to be guided by its ideas on the harmony between reason and faith, the Pope enjoined his addressee to draw a line between the faith and theological writings, use modern methods so as to sound more convincing and coherent when discoursing on the subject of God, and work to fuse the main tenets of the Thomist philosophical system with the most

[1] Jean Onimus, *Pierre Teilhard de Chardin ou la foi au monde,* Paris, 1968, p. 201.

recent achievements of secular sciences.[1]

Recent official documents of the Roman Catholic Church (including Papal ones and those adopted by Councils) contain direct references for works by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.

The core of Teilhard's philosophical system is the idea of evolution and transformism as a continuous and comprehensive process embracing all phenomena. The universal law of natural development and continuous evolution are easily traceable in the visions of the cosmogony conjured up by the thinker, in which the different stages of evolution mutually penetrate and perpetuate each other as a result of quantitative changes occurring at a new, qualitatively higher level. The evolution of matter is carried through the evolution of life, and the latter—through the evolution of consciousness.

Teilhard's work reveals deep confidence in the truth of Darwin's theory of biological evolution and, what is more, in the impossibility for any natural or social science to exist and make progress without due regard for the principle of evolution.[2] Teilhard's concept embraces all basic levels of the evolution of the inorganic, the organic and the social. Being a scholar, he scientifically substantiated the stages of evolution. As a result, his natural-philosophic teaching, which visualizes the world as an all-embracing process of advancement, is virtually free of traditional theological concepts of creation, the role of God, immortality of the soul, etc.

Teilhard's attempt to complement the scientific picture of the world by a peculiar form of idealistic pantheism is colored by teleologism. The total psychism of the Earth, universal spirituality and viability are not ultimately expressed in man, who, according to Teilhard, is himself constantly spiritualized striving for some ultimate spiritual center. Teilhard discovered purpose in the strict regularity of evolution, which is seen from the start as a deliberate ascension to consciousness, further on, to a harmonious mutuality of consciousness, and finally, to the spiritual summit, Omega, where consciousness, which is gradually set free from the Earth, is concentrated.

[1] *L'Osservatore Romano,* 6 December 1974.
[2] P., Teilhard de Chardin, *Le phénomène humain,* Paris, 1955, p. 242.

"In Omega," Teilhard wrote, "we have in the first place the principle we needed to explain both the persistent march of things toward greater consciousness, and the paradoxical solidity of what is most fragile."[1] Thus the laws of evolution and science itself lead man to the spiritual summit, Omega, i.e., God. The existence of God and the need for his existence is "proved" scientifically and not merely postulated by references to the Holy Scriptures and the church doctrine. This is what makes Teilhard's system important for religious modernism. The international symposium on Teilhardism held in San Francisco in May 1971 stated that the contribution of Teilhard de Chardin as a scientist and a Christian consists in his attempt to evolve the religion of the age of science, to create a "theology of nature".

Teilhard's system is not free from contradictions which cannot be resolved within it. His natural philosophy, humanistic ethics and optimistic search rest on an attempt to bring together that which is incompatible—science and religion, the transforming activity of man and teleology, achievements of concrete natural sciences and a certain transcendental spiritual center—the foundation of that which unites the Earth and its ultimate goal.

N. M. Wilders, a Belgian doctor of theology, who wrote an introduction to Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's *Collected Works*, deemed it necessary to supply a few explanations, foreseeing the believers' possible doubts. He wrote that Teilhard's system of universal evolution always implies the existence of personal God as a creative force, and that it would be a mistake to believe that Teilhard does not recognize divine interference into the creation of human soul.[2]

It is true that Teilhardism has mystical and anti-scientific goals, that it seeks to reconcile the rational and irrational, knowledge and faith, to update religion by bringing it into accord with scientific achievements. But it is also true that on many points Teilhard has broken away from the official Thom-

[1] P. Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man,* New York, 1965, p. 271.

[2] P. Teilhard de Chardin, *Le phénomène humain,* p. 15

ist tradition and the church dogma and opened up new prospects which are most unusual in Christianity.

His system has given rise to bitter controversy and a wide range of sentiments among Catholic theologians, from high hopes that Teilhardism will help overcome the present crisis of Christianity to wrathful anathemas against it.

Quite a few elements of Teilhard's system are not in keeping with the official dogma. His concept of the origin of man and especially of human consciousness differs drastically from what the Church says on the subject. After decades of fierce and fruitless struggle against Darwinism and its ideas of biological evolution, the Catholic Church was forced to admit that the theory of evolution is applicable at least to the human organism. But the notorious Humani Generis encyclical issued by Pope Pius XII in 1950 rejected point blank the evolutionist explanation of the origin of the soul. Teilhardism was one of the targets against which the obscurantist declaration was spearheaded.

Propagandizing the ideas set forth in the papal encyclical and seeking to supply the traditional interpretation of the soul with fresh "proof", Catholic philosophers of the traditionalist school emphasized that "each human soul is truly unique, that is, it is a creation 'ex nihilo', and being immortal, it cannot change into another for it would then lose its identity."[1]

Naturally enough, by introducing the notion of universal "psychism", which is in some degree inherent in each form of matter, Teilhard sought to avoid the idea of soul as a product of matter. In fact, he did not discard religion but updated and transformed it. One can cite scores of examples showing the adverse effect of this renovated religion on the scientific value of Teilhard's system of views, but it was precisely that updated theology that attracted the attention of theological modernists.

Transformism, which forms the basis of Teilhard's system and rests on ideas which are not too far removed from materialism and dialectics (continuity and mutual dependence of the phenomena of existence, biological evolution as a particular

[1] Philip G., Fothergill, *Evolution and Christians,* London, 1971, p. 305.

force of universal transformism) has dealt a blow against many Christian canons. Specifically, Teilhard's system has exposed the unsoundness of the cornerstones of theology—the creation of man, the origin of the human race from Adam and Eve, original sin, redemption, evil, the intermediary function of the Church and others. His understanding of creation as a process, the way he in fact identifies creation and evolution, and the pantheist interpretation of the divine contradict the Christian teaching on the transcendental and unchangeable essence of God. Teilhard also accepted the possibility of life on other planets, which undermines this teaching as well.

Teilhard's optimistic faith in man's reason, his progress and future is of particular humanistic significance.

Teilhardism maintains that man is the quintessence of the Universe's previous course of development, "the axis and leading shoot of evolution" conscious of itself and capable of organizing a collective fraternal community of all nations and races along sensible principles.[1] This should lead to the highest level of organization, allowing man to become master of his own destiny, take the reigns of social progress into his hands and secure unprecedented scientific advances.

Teilhard's eschatology has a number of features that are all its own. The upward curve of evolution, he believes, should lead to consciousness, which is gradually freeing itself from matter up to the summit of cosmogony, Omega. Ignoring the features peculiar to the life of society, Teilhard gives a biological interpretation to historical, economic and socio-political questions. He visualizes the attainment of a happy and rational future in the light of religious utopian socialism, disregarding the class antagonisms and class struggle inherent in capitalist society, and placing his trust in "Christian love" and "Christian charity".

The fundamental faults of Teilhard's system—and they multiply when he touches on the problems of the life of society and especially its future—still cannot obscure his deeply-rooted and boundless faith in social progress, his emphasis on the value

[1] P. Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, pp. 36, 221.

of man's action, his respect for labour, scientific research, and the role of man in organizing the future society.

Recently published works by Teilhard contain impassioned appeals for vigorous action on man's part and a curious interpretation of Christianity. "From now on," he wrote, "the only religion acceptable to man is that which will above all teach him to fathom, love and ardently serve the World of which he is part."[1]

Advocating social progress, Teilhard also sought to promote the flourishing of the individual through collective endeavor; in his view, socialization and individualization "go hand in hand".

Teilhard's determined effort to "emancipate" theology from everything that is archaic and obsolete, to establish a new type of relations between religion and society, between God and the world (with the latter appearing as a living organic whole in the process of constant evolution), to popularize a religious teaching which recognizes the high value of labor, human endeavor, scientific research, technological, intellectual and social progress—this effort is essentially unscientific, unrealizable and controversial.

The contradictions innate in Teilhard's system, whose number is far from exhausted by the ones mentioned above (many of which have been subjected to scientific analysis in Marxist literature in the USSR and other countries), leave room for different interpretations of Teilhard's views, and even for concentrating exclusively on their individual aspects, which at times goes directly against its general meaning.

Teilhard's theological and philosophical system, taken as a whole, is essentially theology in the process of disintegration and conveying this process. Therefore, official Catholic ideologists try to emasculate those of Teilhard's views which openly contradict the philosophical and theological clerical doctrine of the Church.

Even Teilhard's followers have split into a number of schools. For the most part these are modernist-minded religious ideolo-

[1] P. Teilhard de Chardin, *Le sens humain, Europe* Paris, mars-avril, 1965, p. 104.

gists who are trying to use Teilhardism to justify the need for a modified attitude toward modern culture, progress and science so as to dissociate themselves from overt irrationalism and integrationalist ideology.

Left-wing religious groups hope to enlist Teilhard's assistance to justify their active interference in the life of society, resistance to social evil and the hardships of life in capitalist society, and their struggle against fascism and militarism. The radicals wish to use Teilhard's system as a meeting ground for people of very different views and convictions (believers and atheists, materialists and idealists, etc.), as well as for justifying their inclination toward socialism and their conviction that a dialogue with Marxism is necessary, and to establish contacts with Communists in an effort to work together against racial and national inequality, the threat of war and capitalist oppression.

The more radical modernist theologians turn to Teilhardism in the hope that it will help them to substantially secularize Catholic theology and bring it closer to universal humanistic ideals, earthly values and aspirations.

However, the ranks of Teilhard's supporters include people who interpret his views on society as an appeal for establishing "Christian peace" and "universal brotherhood" within the framework of modern bourgeois society, a call for a vigorous struggle against the Marxist ideology and denying the assertion of the impossibility of any contacts with Marxists whatsoever.

Historical and philosophical tradition and the age-old tactic employed by the Church when devising an official "theory" that will conform to the spirit of the era help us to understand the essence of the different trends coexisting within one theological system or another. Seven centuries ago, Catholic ideologists chose Thomism from among a number of philosophical systems. Today's clerical historians of philosophy attribute this choice to the fact that Thomism represented an open system which incorporated elements of other philosophical systems. It adapted Aristotle's system to the needs of the Church, assimilated the excessive rationalism of medieval realists and the boundless irrationalism of the Tertullian sort. As a result, the Church was able to replenish its ideological store with quite

modern ideas through the use of the achievements of science and philosophical thought that had been interpreted in a suitable way, and, thus fortified, rose against freedom of thought, a materialist world outlook and progressive social doctrines.

At present, similar practices, i.e., the assimilation of the more popular doctrines and a reconstruction of the entire religious structure to adapt it to the needs of the epoch are underway within many modern religions. A new theology and religious philosophy opposed to a scientific materialist outlook, are gradually emerging as a result of this synthesis, a religious re-interpretation of ideas produced by scientific, cultural and social progress, which are deprived of their materialist and revolutionary essence.

Along with a directly philosophical function, the updated theological and philosophical doctrine is called upon to theoretically reinforce modernism throughout the religious complex as a whole.

Trends That Do Not Affect the Foundations of the Official Social Doctrine

Though religious trends differ and are now undergoing a modernization process, they all imply a kind of social pacification, rejection of drastic social change, and a particular form of ethical reformism. In bourgeois society, modernist concepts, which convey neo-capitalist ideas under a religious guise, as well as the practical public activity of religious leaders; all lend ideological and political support to historically doomed forces. True, at present, the defence of the cornerstones of bourgeois society is usually couched in anti-capitalist terms which lash out against the minor "imperfections" of capitalism, such as the immorality of certain representatives of the ruling elite or their "boundless greed" and "egoism".

The social conservatism of religious political doctrines is apparent when it comes to the questions of private property, relations among classes, the role of the bourgeois state, revolution and reform, etc.

These issues, which play so important a part in the present-day ideological confrontation and have in the past decades been subjected to a number of modifications, have not lost their central place in religious propaganda and the sociological writings of different religious schools, still remaining an important weapon of clericalism in the campaign to bolster and justify the bourgeois system. Similar, as far as their content is concerned, to bourgeois and reformist concepts, religious political doctrines are distinguished by their form, appealing as they do to the people's religious sentiment and superstitions.

The doctrine of private property, which has been elaborated with particular thoroughness by Catholic and Protestant ideologists, represents private property as a divine institution, an inalienable right of society and man. Since the last century and up to the present, the same bourgeois apologetic arguments have been employed to support this thesis: private property is supposed to guarantee the independence of the individual and the family, secure the right of choice and freedom of action, and help society to multiply its wealth and make progress; the absence of private property, on the other hand, is said to produce universal idleness and indolence.

In a modified form, this idea forms part of the official social doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. In the summer of 1980, on his visit to Brazil, Pope John Paul II stated that, generally speaking, the right to own property is legitimate but, in conformity with the Christian doctrine, property should be distributed "more justly" and made to fulfil social functions.[1]

Other issues also reveal the proximity of religious doctrines and traditional bourgeois theories. A great deal of favorable publicity has been given to capitalist enterprise for allegedly ensuring the commonweal of the "mutually interested" sides involved in it. The inequality of social roles need not cause any doubts, as these roles are supposed to complement each other in the creation of a harmonious system. Cooperation among social classes is to be established within the framework

[1] *L'Osservatore Romano,* 9 July, 1980.

of capitalist enterprise, which is improved to live up to the principles of the religious social doctrine.

Attacking the Marxist doctrine on the historical process and the role of the class struggle in it, clerical theorists oppose to it the religious teaching of "non-violence", maintaining that "progress along the paths of love" will provide a humanistic solution to the social problem.

It is a characteristic feature of social religious theories that they inevitably appeal to moral categories, seeking to explain away social injustice by man's "moral imperfection". Reducing the problem to the need for man's moral improvement, they hope to prove that a revolutionary transformation of society is completely unnecessary.

Typical in this respect are some of the essays in *Labor Problems in Christian Perspective*, a collection of articles by Canadian and American religious sociologists and church officials of different faiths. Hendrik Hart, who is on the faculty of the Toronto Institute for Christian Studies (his article is entitled "Alienation") sees the source of social evils besetting the Western world in the alienation of man from God, in the process of secularization and the specifically secular world outlook, this product of Western civilization according to which alienation from God is regarded as a sign of a person's maturity.

In the meantime, Hart maintains, true freedom and salvation lie in "unconditional surrender to Christ" and that all other ways are prompted by the devil and can only end in a blind alley, resting as they do on a strictly secular concept of "economic materialism". The author believes that all theories, methods and means aimed at re-distributing material wealth and recognizing the inevitability of antagonisms only serve to increase alienation, inasmuch as they are directed against the symptoms of the disease but not the disease itself. By virtue of their materialist orientation, revolutionary theories and movements allegedly cannot bring relief but, on the contrary, enhance isolation, and are therefore reactionary.[1]

[1] *Labor Problems In Christian Perspective,* Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1972, pp. 289, 293-94.

Preaching "brotherhood in Christ", the author spares no effort to discredit the theory and practice of class struggle and to prove that in capitalist society class antagonisms and social tensions are bred not by objective circumstances but by warped secular consciousness. It follows that the only way out of this situation is to turn to God, effect an inner moral reformation and engage in moral self-improvement.

Clerical ideologists extend these ideas to the developing world. Pierre Bigo, a French theologian who has spent years in developing countries and is well versed in the Church's social programme, is the author of the book *The Church and Revolution in the Third World.* Bigo insists that any aggressive behavior towards the propertied classes in that region is inadmissible. In his opinion, a transition to a new society cannot be based on coercion; this process implies a "transformation of consciousness" of the broad popular masses through religious faith, which he considers "the source of renovation now changing the face of the world".[1]

Conservative, anti-revolutionary ideas and concepts are advocated not only by individual clerical authors but, what is more important, by leading figures of many mass church organizations. In October 1979, the Conference of higher Catholic hierarchy of the Philippines adopted an address that was later read out in all the country's churches. It stressed, in particular, that clerical bodies should deprecate as a criminally irresponsible deed the incitement of the suffering poor to revolutionary violence, which engenders hatred, leads to unnecessary bloodshed and a tragic loss of many lives, and only seldom, if ever at all, helps to attain something beneficial.

However, the authors of the address were also obliged to admit that together with corruption and the use of force to protect the privileges of the ruling classes, mass poverty, privations, the numerous forms of social injustice and political oppression, as well as the lack of rights of the poorest sections of the population have aggravated discontent and compelled the masses to turn to violence as the only way out of their

[1] P. Bigo, *L'église et la révolution du tiers monde,* Paris, 1974, p. 269.

present situation. In this context, heads of the Catholic Church have appealed to "state leaders" to channel their efforts into "a profound social renewal" and the "prevention of and intolerance towards violations of human rights which produce counter-violence".

A negative attitude towards the revolutionary changes that have actually been accomplished is displayed by representatives of different religious trends, including those who seriously believe themselves to hold liberal views. Even advocates of the so-called "theology of revolution", which is trying to overcome the "biased" idea that the Church and revolution are incompatible, are sparing no effort to discredit socialist revolution and real socialism and substitute them by a certain socio-ethical movement guided by Christian ideas.

Proceeding from the belief that social injustice is rooted in the evil inherent in human nature religious social doctrines usually conclude that revolution is futile and unnatural. Consequently, only inner moral self-improvement and self-denial are thought to be effective weapons against sinfulness and will eventually lead to the establishment of a just world order. Clerical sociologists assert that man has his own inner "fifth column"—egoism, pride, indolence, etc. —which paves the way for the other faults. From here it is but a step to social and political issues. If the main thing is moral self-improvement and self-denial and "saving one from oneself", then any social issue can be successfully dealt with only on a religious basis, which ensures cooperation of individuals, nations and classes on the basis of love and forgiveness. The Marxist appeal, "Workers of all countries, unite!" which is accused of inciting one social group to fight another, is to be replaced by the idea of the union of believers of all countries.

This traditionally anti-revolutionary position was expounded by Pope Paul VI in his speech before the leaders of the Belgian Christian Workers' Movement: there is a substantial difference between true love for one's brother and the illusory brotherhood which seeks to bring together all members of a social class so as to better unite them in the struggle against the people of another class, who are, however, brothers, too.

This makes the Church reject revolutionary action as breeding a host of injustices and suffering. The way to solve the social problem, at least in the opinion of a large part of the clergy in the capitalist countries, is to gradually improve the institutions of the existing system, which are valuable in themselves and capable of improvement, while a sudden and drastic change could dangerously shake them.

Typical in this respect is the stand of the US episcopate which was made public on the eve of the 1980 Presidential elections. Using the Christian precept of "love for one's fellowman" as the springboard, the episcopate enjoined followers to adhere to this principle not only in relations among individuals but in all societies and communities, including mankind at large.[1]

Elaborating upon these utopian ethico-sociological concepts in his speech at the annual New Year reception of the leaders of the Vatican Curia on December 22, 1980, Pope John Paul II spoke of the need to foster ethical religious ideas in all members of society and all its strata so as to be able to create a harmonious, serene, constructive, peaceful and joyous society.[2] Such socio-ethical trends are not merely utopian but socially confusing; they can only disseminate social passivity, postponing the solution of pressing social and political problems until the indefinite future.

This obliges researchers adhering to the Marxist-Leninist social doctrine, as well as other representatives of progressive democratic circles, to criticize the modern, substantially updated religious social doctrine advocated in the capitalist countries with a view to supplying an ideological foundation to the capitalist system of relations and spreading the conservative ideas of "social peace". Obscuring the true sources of sociopolitical, class antagonisms, clerical propaganda offers an illusory way of dealing with social problems, which causes the people to lose sight of effective means of struggle for emancipation and development of the individual, and perpetuates the relations of exploitation prevailing in the capitalist world.

1 *La Documentation catholique,* 1980, 6.I, p. 27.
2 *L'Osservatore Romano,* 22-23 December 1980.

This conservative social function of religion is revealed by an analysis of other aspects of the relationship between society and religious bodies and, above all, in the attitude of the Church to the decisive factor of social progress today—socialism, its ideology and practices.

True, socio-political change, and, the upsurge of the democratic and socialist movement have compelled the Church to revize its social propaganda in order to be able to meet the requirements of the day. Bourgeois writings and the Western religious press have even used this fact to assert that clerical organizations have evolved a new attitude to the bourgeois system and that the mood of their members and leaders are clearly "anti-capitalist".

The only novel features of modern social religious doctrines in the industrially developed capitalist countries are those reflecting the concessions wrangled by the working people out of the state which have been "recognized" by bourgeois democracy. The Church has in fact sanctioned that which has been gained in the course of hard class struggle. The Constitution *On the Church in the World of Today* adopted by the Second Vatican Council, as well as statements made by church hierarchs mention the right of the working people to form unions, recognize the legality of strikes as a means of defending workers' rights (but only as an extreme measure and on condition that the "commonweal" is not impaired), emphasize the moral worth of labor and recognize the need for dealing with the social aspects of labor in this age of advanced technology and engineering.

All more or less important recent Protestant and Catholic documents dealing with social issues discuss the topical problems (even if they are treated in the abstractly humanistic manner characteristic of religious sociology) which left-wing, democratic elements in bourgeois states have been bringing up with increasing frequency and insistence. Among these are employment, participation of workers in the management of enterprises, urbanization and social security, demographic problems, health care, leisure, the sensible use of natural resources and nature preservation. The Church advances complete-

ly worldly demands—respect for man's basic rights, including those guaranteeing an opportunity to lead a dignified existence and enjoy civil freedoms (with the freedom of assembly among them), social security and access to the cultural wealth.

The Church has been making extensive use of secular bourgeois theories with their ideas, means and methods of sociological research, thus giving the issues traditionally considered to be within the religious field a distinctly sociological slant.

Naturally enough, the goal here is to give substance to the "religious alternative" to Marxism, and as concerns the new ideas introduced into the religious social doctrine "under duress", they do not extend beyond the bourgeois democratic rights and freedoms won by the working people in the industrially advanced capitalist countries, not to mention their failure to consider the foundation of the capitalist system—relations of private property. Even today, the ramified religious propaganda network continues to insist on the need for a brotherly union and harmonious interaction of labor and capital, a close collaboration of workers and entrepreneurs, and appeals to the bourgeois state as the "custodian of the commonweal". One of the watchwords of the year 1975, which the Catholic Church declared the "holy year", was "reconciliation". Elaborating upon its meaning, Pope Paul VI stressed that it should be understood in a broad sense as reconciliation among people, in the family, at work and in society, and as rejection of all theories of the class struggle.[1]

Pope John Paul II's speeches delivered during his visit to the Philippines in February 1981 again displayed the anti-revolutionary trend of modern socio-political doctrines and activities of the official leadership of the Christian churches in bourgeois countries. They contained an exposition of all characteristic features of religious social reconciliation.

Pope John Paul II did not confine himself to declaring the positive significance of such religious values as humility, love of one's fellowman and class peace; he also urged the believers to "rebuff all manifestations of materialist ideology" and cen-

[1] *L'Osservatore Romano,* 13 June 1975.

sured the class struggle and revolutionary coercion. Addressing the inhabitants of Manila slums, he said, among other things, that the way to their emancipation was not the way of violence, class struggle or hatred. It was the way of love, brotherhood and peaceful accord.[1]

Speaking before cutters of sugar cane in the Negros Island, who are known in the Philippines as "outcasts among outcasts", he also referred to the class struggle as the worst form of violence which cannot and must not be a method of eliminating social injustice.

Unfolding the familiar ideas of Christian peace, Pope John Paul II tried to convince his audiences that the sugar barons and the *sacadas* (seasonal workers hired to cut sugar cane) are "brothers" who ought to "love each other as befits the children of Christ". He exhorted the *sacadas* to be guided by the teaching of Christ, to humbly fulfil the mission with which God has entrusted them—to work diligently, and to believe that the class struggle cannot lead to justice and that violence must never become a means of settling social conflicts.[2]

Speaking in the Philippines, the Pope repeatedly stated that the Church is the only true champion of the workers' interests, and appealed to the working people to rally round the teaching of Christ in order to jointly build a society based on justice.

Much the same ideas were expounded by John Paul II on his tour of Asian and Oceanic countries undertaken in the spring of 1984. In South Korea, he tried to convince the people suffering under the dictatorship to "forgive those who have trespassed against them", since a believer ought to be free from the feelings of hatred and revenge. He went out of his way to warn the people against the class struggle, referring to it as "a great tragedy of mankind".

In 1981, the Vatican deliberately chose the Philippines as a tribune for promulgating the doctrine of the Christian "society of justice". In that country social contradictions have been mounting, and revolutionary liberation ideas gaining wide support. The Catholic Church is determined to influence the

[1] *L'Osservatore Romano,* 19 February 1975.
[2] *Ibid.,* 21 February 1981.

situation in the country and erect a "sanitary cordon" against communism there, using the entire range of means at its disposal.

On the very first day of his visit to the Philippines, the head of the Roman Catholic Church had a talk with the President, in which he voiced serious concern over the vigorous activity of "Marxist elements", including members of the clergy. Advertizing the idea of establishing a Christian "society of justice and social peace" in the Philippines, the Vatican is trying to represent it as a "peaceful and democratic alternative to totalitarian communism".

As Maxime Gremetz, member of the French Communist Party Political Bureau, rightly noted, Pope John Paul II's pronouncements were directed against the natural course of history and are conservative and reactionary. Millions of working people, including believers, have chosen a different way, one that leads to real emancipation, socialism.[1]

Rejection and denunciation of revolutionary coercion is a major feature of religious sociology in the bourgeois world and one that can only contribute to the preservation of existing bourgeois relations and the social status quo in the capitalist countries.

This premise remains valid even in spite of the fact that the more blatant vices of bourgeois society have recently been subjected to scathing criticism; the "liberal system", which is aimed at extracting maximum profits, has been condemned, and warnings have sounded against forgetting the dignity of the working masses and the fact that the "advantages of civilization can and should be accessible to everyone".

Aware of the mood prevailing among believers belonging to the working classes, Pope John Paul II said on his visit to France that "the society pleasing to God cannot be organized in a way allowing some people—the minority—to amass excessive wealth, while the others—the overwhelming majority—suffer from poverty, and privations and die of hunger."[2]

An interesting report was brought out by a conference of

[1] *L'Humanité*, 21 February 1981.
[2] *Ibid.*, 3 June 1980.

the Canadian episcopate devoted to unemployment, the primary problem of the capitalist world. The report gave a realistic account of the hardships and misfortunes suffered by the unemployed and attempted to uncover the cause of this social evil so humiliating to man; it also censured the concentration of economic power in the hands of a few corporations, the gap between the development levels of the country's regions, penetration of foreign capital into the national economy and unwise use of natural resources. But this realistic description of the vices of capitalist society failed to lead the authors of the document to the logical conclusion of the profound depravity of bourgeois social relations and the need for their drastic change. The matter ended with earnest calls for a society based on justice and love.[1]

It has recently become common practice with the Church in bourgeois states to include pronouncements in defence of the poor, the working people and the "underprivileged" in all statements on social and political issues.

Typical in this respect is Pope John Paul II's address to the poorest sections of Brazil's population in the summer of 1980. On a visit to Rio de Janeiro's slums, he spoke at length about the concept of "the poor people's church" and the merits of the poor, who are supposed to please God the most, being modest, compassionate, open-hearted and ready to help their fellowmen in time of need. This flattering moral characteristic of the poor was reinforced by appeals to the wealthy to be sensible and share their riches with others for the sake of a more just distribution of wealth. Everyone was exhorted to be more humane and just.[2]

As a rule, protestations of sympathy with the poor are accompanied by talks on the need for reform within the framework of the "third non-violent way" steering clear of "dangerous radicalism".

The new, and in some of its aspects, positive interpretation of the traditional reformist concept of the "third way" has assimilated the idea of the need for change in one sphere or

[1] *La Documentation catholique,* 2 December 1980, pp. 235-241.
[2] *L'Osservatore Romano,* 4 July 1980.

another, although, of course, in the long run the matter boils down to changes of moral nature which do not threaten the existing structures of exploiter society.

Things cannot be changed by reiterated appeals for justice and stressing the importance of protecting the poor man's dignity and settling the problems facing the working people in bourgeois society to their advantage.

One of the more striking examples of social preaching of this sort was the speech of Pope John Paul II in Saint-Denis, a working-class Paris suburb. Addressing the workers, among whom were many immigrants, the Pope gave a true-to-life account of their hardships and degradation, and demanded that they be given a chance to lead a life worthy of man. Admitting that the workers had ample cause to feel as they did, the Pope condemned the "rich", but he also warned the "world of labor" against acting within the "narrow schemes of class hatred". What the head of the Roman Catholic Church had to offer was creating the world of labor worthy of man and resurrecting evangelical love in the hearts of workers, all strata of society and all nations through moral force. Otherwise, he warned, new forms of class egoism will spring up which will pave the way for the struggle of everyone against everyone, and even for self-annihilation.

Judging from statements by high-ranking church officials and church documents, religious bodies have recently been making wider use of liberal reformist sociological and economic concepts, such as universal access to property, people's capitalism attained by selling stock to workers and employees, industrial society as a means of eliminating poverty and social inequality, social partnership, etc.

Thus, it may be seen that there is a rapprochement between the views and vocabulary of religious leaders in bourgeois states and those of petty-bourgeois and bourgeois socialists, who, as Marx and Engels put it, are "desirous of redressing social grievances, in order to secure the continued existence of bourgeois society".[1]

[1] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works,* Vol. 6, p. 513.

Indeed, modifications introduced into the Church's social doctrines have not spearheaded them against the foundations of the bourgeois system or suggested realistic ways of eliminating social injustice. They have only supplemented them with updated social-reformist ideas. This proves that in the long run, the church doctrine is in fact the sum total of concepts representing the interests of certain social strata and classes in a religious guise.

Similar conclusions are prompted by an analysis of social doctrines advanced by other churches, for instance, the various concepts of "Islamic economy" which have recently been widely promoted in the developing countries of the Moslem East.

Not only has Islam been recently exerting a stronger impact on the ideological and political life in Asian and African countries, but there has also been enhanced interest in Moslem social and economic models, the so-called "Islamic alternative" to Western models of development. Moslem theoreticians have proposed that the shariat laws concerning property and inheritance, prohibition of interest rates on loans (*riba*), and the religious tax (*zakyat*) serve as the "economic values of Islam".

Although all theories of "Islamic economy" recognize the need for strict observance of the injunctions of the faith, they interpret Islamic norms depending on the interests and views of the social group they represent, e.g., the peasantry, urban poor, top exploiter stratum, feudal nobility, semi-proletarian and petty-bourgeois sections.

Petty-bourgeois radicals are trying to restrict the amassing of wealth regarding only that property as legal which has been acquired through personal labor. Representatives of the bourgeoisie and landowners refrain from elaborating upon the concepts of "property based on personal labor" and "personal labor", stressing the inviolability of property and seeking to legitimize modern forms of capitalist enterprise through a tendentious interpretation of the Koran and early Islamic practices. The attitude to *zakyat*, the religious tax, is a good example, showing how differently the principles of "Islamic economy" can be construed. Radicals regard the tax as a means of improving the poorer people's conditions by taking part of

the surplus away from the rich, while conservatives restrict themselves to talk about the beneficial effect of compassion shown by wealthy Moslems to the needy members of their faith, and the importance of *zakyat* payments for maintaining law and order in society.

The controversy that arises among Moslem theoreticians when they attempt to define economic categories mounts when this activity entails practical and political consequences. This has been pointed out by Michael Fischer, professor at Harvard University, in his analysis of the "principle of justice". His work *Iran. From Religious Dispute to Revolution* is an attempt to explain the Iranian Revolution of 1977-79 from the viewpoint of the changes it has introduced into culture and religion. Among other things, the book reviews the debate, now under way in Iran, about fair and unfair profits and the justice of regarding money-lending and bank operations as "unfair activity".[1]

The modern trend in the confrontation of the two social systems is towards sharper demarcation between bourgeois and petty-bourgeois interpreters of Islam on the one hand, and advocates of the socialist alternative of development on the other. At times, one interpretation of "Islamic economy" comes to prevail over others in a particular country depending on the political situation and the alignment of class forces, including that in local Moslem movements.

Differences of opinion manifest themselves in attitudes to key questions of the national liberation movement: the bourgeois and the socialist system, imperialism, neo-colonialism and protest movements of oppressed members of the faith.

Leaders of a number of church organizations in the capitalist countries have recently been showing stronger determination to prevent the Church from cooperating too closely with the bourgeois system. Their political passivity can be explained, above all, by the fact that due to its inhuman and aggressive character, modern capitalism has lost its attractiveness to a large section of believers.

[1] M. Fischer, *Iran. From Religious Dispute to Revolution,* Cambridge, 1980, pp. 157-59.

Back in 1963, Pope Paul VI's letter to the chairman of the Social Week in France held in Cannes, and later the Constitution "The Church in the World of Today" adopted by the Second Vatican Council stated that the Church does not associate itself "either with any specific form of human culture, or with a political, economic or social system". This idea has recently been voiced by many church leaders belonging to different faiths. On the eve of local and Presidential elections in May 1980, the Peruvian Episcopate, proceeding from the conviction that the mission of the Church is a strictly religious one, stressed that it does not support any single political system or social model. True, the same document stated that the believers are not to join any political projects based on ideas of atheistic materialism.[1]

In early March 1981, addressing a group of French parliamentarians, the Pontiff advocated "political pluralism" as suitable to Catholics. He stated that under conditions of democracy, Catholics may join political associations only on condition that, when confronted with the need to make a choice or reach a decision, they will be guided not only by generally recognized ethical principles but also by the principles proclaimed by the Gospel or proceeding from it. Thus the leader of the Catholic Church has made the question of Catholic support for either socialism or capitalism appear totally irrelevant; the believers are simply enjoined to apply religious canons to public life, too. This new and significant thesis proclaiming the Church's social universality also stems from its wish to "survive" notwithstanding any political change and to find its place in any political system, including socialism, which has been established on one-third of the globe.

One and the same religion can, and does exist under different political regimes and different types of government: in its "pure" form, no religion comprises any definite political program determining the stand to be taken by its followers in one situation or another. Not a single religion has ever straightforwardly prescribed an attitude to be taken by believers

[1] *La Documentation catholique,* 1966, 6/II, col. 228.

to any given political or ideological issue. And this is not only because the political opinions of many religious leaders are not in keeping with the vital interests of believers from among the working classes. In each country, depending on its political system and status, the same religion with its norms and categories is interpreted and used by different groups of believers to promote different political and ideological ends. Even within one country, one religion has been known to justify and serve as a foundation for opposite political programs.

Even when functioning in an antagonistic society, religion and its institutions need not extoll capitalism. Representatives of the clergy's "renewalist" wing even believe that withholding support for the exploiter system is the best way to meet the urgent needs of the Church in a world where the sphere of capitalist relations is steadily shrinking. That is why they are trying so hard to prevent the Church from appearing to be a political defender of the bourgeoisie. Particularly active in this respect are church leaders in the countries where anti-capitalist movements are gaining momentum, specifically in Latin America.

But declarations about the need to confine the function of the Church to strictly religious matters and satisfaction of the believers' religious needs are sometimes belied by the actual state of affairs. Religion in a "pure form" simply does not exist. Numerous and diversified links with the ruling classes of capitalist society compel the Church, which is seeking to perpetuate the existing social relations, to actively interfere into public life; moreover, the ideology and policies of right-wing clerical groups have a clearly anti-communist and pro-capitalist trend. Another fact to be remembered is that a number of churches in bourgeois countries are big capitalist proprietors with enormous wealth consisting of bank capital, land and stock.

Articles released by the bourgeois press show that the activities of particular church institutions have a bourgeois entrepreneur aspect. A few years ago, *Stern* asserted that the wealth of West German churches is virtually boundless. The figures cited by the magazine proved that the Church in the FRG owns huge tracts of land; 350,000 hectares of West German

property belong to the Catholic Church alone.

Recurring overproduction crises, inflation and unemployment—these features of life in West Germany and other capitalist states cannot undermine the Church's material position. It has been estimated that the Catholic and Evangelical Churches annually receive about 5.5 billion marks from their parishioners, plus another 6 billion in regular state grants and donations. *Stern* stated that the Church is also a major stockholder, owning up to 2 billion marks worth of stock and bonds.

Clerical businessmen are engaged in vigorous commercial activity investing capital in secular projects and enterprises.

In the USA alone, the Catholic Church owns about $40 bln worth of property. The Vatican owns major banks in Italy and some other capitalist countries and has holdings in numerous companies and industries that produce goods ranging from electronic equipment to toilet paper. However, an accurate estimate of the Vatican's riches is practically impossible to make, as it often acts through intermediaries when conducting business operations.

Business interests cannot but strengthen the links between the bourgeois system and the Church, prompting the latter to defend capitalist production relations. But the Church does its best to disguise this fact, taking care to criticize only individual aspects of life in bourgeois society.

An example of the Church's subtle interference into the political life of a country in order to promote the interests of bourgeois parties can be seen in the decision passed in mid-April 1970 by the Conference of Italian Bishops on the eve of regional elections. No mention was made of the elections proper, no prohibitions were issued against voting for Communists, as used to be the case in the past, but the bishops appealed to the conscience of all Italians and, reminding the believers about the situation prevailing in the country, urged them to make a choice sanctified by the evangelical message and church doctrine.

During the administrative elections held in Italy on May 12, 1985, some bishops, including Ugo Poletti, the Cardinal Vicar, exhorted the Catholics to support only the candidates of the

Christian-Democratic Party and levelled sharp criticism against the municipalities headed by Communists. The Pope himself interfered in the elections: speaking at a Catholic conference in Loretto, he broadly hinted as to which of the candidates the believers were to support.

A scientific analysis of the new features in the relationship between clerical and secular authorities and between religion and politics in the capitalist countries has helped expose not only "legitimate" ties between them but covert ones as well.

At present, these ties are in the process of change, which assumes different forms depending on the geographical region and the social and political conditions prevailing in the area. The latter also determine the mode of expression when making an assessment of Marxism. Certain religious leaders and organizations have recently suggested that "a serious study should be undertaken of the relations between the Marxist doctrine, which seeks to achieve emancipation without God, and the Gospel, which offers salvation through faith".

In the early 1980, discussing the evangelization of workers, the Archbishop of Bordeaux admitted, when touching on the subject of Marxism and the working class, that Marxism has been able to explain the injustices the workers have had to suffer, and, as it appealed to many of them, had become a major trend in the working class movement.

All modern religious bodies have recently been displaying enhanced interest in the working class and making a special effort to induce workers to join their ranks. This is a curious tribute to the increased importance of the working class in the world today, and the upsurge of its activity in countries where, until recently, it was either non-existent or very insignificant.

All Christian churches are concerned with expanding their activity among workers, from introducing the institution of worker clergymen to establishing confessional workers' organizations. In February 1980 a meeting of the leaders of the Society of Jesus with Jesuits from among the working class of West Germany, Belgium, Spain, France, Holland and Italy emphasized the importance of missionary work among the working

class and pointed out the need to live in a working-class environment sharing the workers' joys and griefs in order to more effectively "evangelize" them.

The impact of "local" bodies (which are under pressure from rank-and-file church-goers) on the formation of more general clerical policies is reflected even at major church forums. The Episcopal Synod held in 1974 sharply criticized the resolution on "evangelization" problems, as well as the stand of the Church on the major social issues of today. This vehement opposition was a response to demands advanced by Latin American, African and Asian bishops that the Curia evolve a more unequivocal approach to these issues instead of passing off the usual vague statements. Back in 1971, the voting on the document dealing with "justice in this world" split the Synod into conservatives and modernists. Three years later, the subject of "evangelization of the Church in the world of today" produced much the same controversy, but by that time, Latin American, African and Asian Episcopates had gained in importance and were more adamant in their demands that the Church support the oppressed and condemn social injustice and the social and political forces responsible for it.

They also raised the issue of the need to study Marxist trends more closely, enter into a more realistic and less scholastic dialogue with them, and advocated contacts with the socialist world.

Stemming from the dramatic changes in the correlation of socio-political forces on the planet, this most uncharacteristic tolerance displayed by a number of churches towards the influential political force, the communist movement, has affected the stand adopted by the world religious centres. The attitude of the Vatican and its head, Pope John Paul II, to Catholic membership in left-wing parties, including the Communist Party of Italy, is of particular interest. A Vatican representative stated that in an "unofficial interview" the Pope had said that although he continues to treat Catholics working in left-wing parties as Catholics, since they have not broken with the Church, he cannot regard their political choice as consistent with the principles of the faith and morality. Neither denunciations nor

threats were sounded, even though the Pope confirmed that the communist "political choice" is regarded as contradicting the principles of religion.

Needless to say, the policies of the Church remain anti-democratic, and the wish to influence the believers' political convictions is still there, but the forms of activities towards these ends are much less militant, and threats of excommunication on political grounds are no longer made.

An analysis of the work of religious bodies in bourgeois states shows that the Church is trying hard to build up its reputation as a "third force" which equally deprecates the "extremes" of liberal capitalism and the "vices" of communism. This idea is particularly widespread in the Third World, where the Church is compelled to reckon with the fact that the mass of church-goers and part of the clergy continue to support the national liberation movement against colonialism and neo-colonialism. Speaking before an audience of youth in Yamoussoukro (the Côte d'Ivoire), Pope John Paul II exhorted the young people to "be on the alert" against "those models of society which are based on self-seeking pursuit of individual happiness and wealth, or on the class struggle and violence".[1]

Generally speaking, all religious trends now tend to display greater historical caution, unwillingness to associate themselves with right-wing regimes, and determination to have no part in their odious practices.

A large part of the Protestant clergy in South West Africa (Namibia) and South Africa have spoken out against racism, apartheid and the different forms of colonialism. The Anglican bishop in Damaraland (Namibia) openly declared that the Church should proclaim its solidarity with the struggle of the oppressed, and make known throughout the world what apartheid regimes are doing to Africans.

Tha Anglican Church of South Africa and the other Christian churches have condemned the racist laws in effect in the country, as well as the use of torture on African prisoners. Keeping people under arrest and torturing them until they

[1] *L'Osservatore Romano,* 12-13 May 1980.

die, depriving people of all political and civil rights and the freedom of speech—this is the state of affairs in South Africa, and it has convinced many Africans that the only language they can use in their dealings with the Whites is the language of arson, disturbances, assassinations and victimization, said the Archbishop of the Anglican Church of Capetown in the winter of 1977.

At a colloquium held in England in March 1984, representatives of the major churches of the world adopted a declaration denouncing apartheid, specifically, in South Africa. Buddhists, Hinduists, Judaists, Moslems, Christians, Sikhs and representatives of the traditional religions of Africans and American Indians declared that "apartheid is a deeply-rooted evil" and advocated a boycott of South Africa and Namibia in trade, finance, sports and culture and extending support to organizations fighting for political freedom and self-determination.

Religious activists cannot ignore the fact that church-goers, who, together with other working people, are laboring under growing social and economic oppression and are increasingly aware of the need to avert the threat of war and halt the arms race, are expecting the Church to revize its policies and take effective measures to protect the interests of the common people.

The determined action of religious forces in the globe's troubled regions mirrors the powerful movement of protest and the striving of the people for emancipation. But, curiously enough, in a number of cases it has a protectionist character. Religious leaders fear the revolutionary outbursts which could sweep away the existing system of social and economic relations. A revealing statement was made in February 1977 by a bishop in Rhodesia. Addressing the country's Prime Minister, he said that, contrary to what the authorities are asserting, their policies do not only fail to protect Christianity and Western civilization but are flouting God's laws and making communism attractive to the people.

The social doctrines of churches operating in the non-socialist countries have recently revealed a tendency to use social-

democratic ideas. This process to a large extent overlaps with the policy of liberalization, the attempt to represent the Church as a democratic organization of simple people which is guarding their interests and is particularly noticeable in West Germany and Austria.

At the joint meeting of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany and representatives of the Church held in West Germany in November 1978, both parties delivered reports which, although conveying different viewpoints, considered much the same problems, used the same set of concepts and proclaimed common objectives in the social and economic field—"to establish 'a society of solidarity', in which freedom and justice will be the guiding principles".[1]

In October 1976, the Catholic Social Academy (Vienna) and the leadership of the Socialist Party of Austria (SPA) held a symposium with a view to "promoting confidence" between the Church and democratic socialism, which is the foundation of SPA's policies.

A book based on the symposium's materials reveals that despite the differences pertaining to world outlook, both sides use similar concepts and political slogans. Freedom, justice, solidarity and equality are interpreted in the spirit of reformist ethical socialism. Incidentally, many of the speakers voiced the idea that ethics can provide the basis for the "historical compromise" between the Church and Social-Democracy and a point of departure when dealing with common problems.[2]

Similar tendencies are operating in other bourgeois and developing countries. Discussing pressing problems of today—unemployment, crises, lack of confidence in the future, the need to create harmonious social relations among people, humanize labor and overcome the ecological crisis, religious leaders suggest that answers to these questions may be found in social ethics. Needless to say, no one has proposed trying to

[1] J. Rau, F. Böckle, *Sozialdemokratie und Kirchen. Zukunftsprobleme und Zukunftsbewältigung in einer demokratischen Gesellschaft,* Bonn, 1979, p. 33.

[2] H. Büchele, H. Hoefnagels, B. Kreisky, *Kirche und demokratischer Sozialismus,* Wien, 1978, p. 93.

introduce fundamental changes into bourgeois law and order.

An analysis of these facts leads to the conclusion that, at present, there is no reason to believe that the churches operating in the capitalist countries have drastically altered their official social doctrines.

It is still the same doctrine of social pacification which opposes drastic change and, in the long run, supports historically doomed forces, thus obstructing social progress.

Chapter IV

DEMOCRATIC IDEAS IN MYSTICAL GUISE

Even within the framework of a single religion, neither the socio-political views nor the actions they engender have ever been completely uniform. Over recent decades, the process of stratification among the clergy and the church-goers in the non-socialist countries, has increased considerably. Within religious organizations, left-wing elements have emerged which oppose the official church leadership, especially its right wing, both as far as the dogma and internal church matters, and socio-political issues are concerned. Not only do these leftists refuse to extend support to reactionary regimes or sanctify the anti-popular actions of the ruling quarters, they also frequently engage in open struggle on the side of progressive democratic forces.

Particularly active are left-wing religious groups which follow the "theology of emancipation", i.e., speak out in defence of the exploited and those deprived of their political and social rights, and condemn exploiters and the governments protecting their interests. This trend came into being as a result of the upsurge in the revolutionary movements in the Third World and involvement of the majority of believers in the liberation struggle.

The vigorous anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist activity of the leftists within different faiths and their contribution to the struggle against fascism, militarism, oligarchy, and in support of the basic rights of the working people (the right to work, peace, and social and national freedom) are proving more and more effective. A clergyman with a rifle in his hands is not an unusual sight in the regions where people are fighting against despotism, militarism and neo-colonialism (Latin America, a number of regions in Asia and Africa).

Leaders and followers of these trends are usually inspired by radical interpretations of religion which increasingly diverge from the policies of the official churches. The faith itself, "emancipation theologians" believe, must become a liberating force, promote observance of human rights, act on the side of the fighting people and seek to establish a new society built along the principles of justice and fraternity.[1] The fact is that the revolutionary action of religious activists produces changes in the social orientation of theology: "Our theology must appeal to poor countries and to the poor in these countries."[2]

The existence of a broad range of leftist religious trends is a notable and complex phenomenon. There is reason to believe that their action is not mere social manoeuvring but a stage in the development of democratic forces united in confessional organizations.

Leftist religious trends mirror the mood of millions of believers and their striving for social justice and progress. Criticizing capitalism and neo-colonialism, they contribute to the liberation movement and take part in it; they campaign for democratic social reform and even support social revolution as a means of transforming society; and advocate a union of all democratically and progressively-minded people and the pooling of efforts of all anti-imperialist forces. The views and actions of leftist elements in fact signify a revision of the official social doctrine and the social practices of the Church, which has hitherto always supported those in positions of authority and promoted the interests of the ruling elite.

Stratification Within Modern Religious Organizations: Causes and Consequences

How far stratification within religious bodies has gone depends to a large extent on the general situation in a particular

[1] *Etudes,* No. 9, 1981, p. 245.
[2] *Liberation ou adaptation? La theologie africaine s'interroge,* Paris, 1979, p. 11.

country or region, the presence or absence of democratic traditions, the scope of the class movement, and the overall complex of social and political conditions.

Proof of this is the situation in Latin America, where a number of factors, above all the double and even treble oppression (by local landlords, monopolies and US imperialism), has promoted the growth of the anti-imperialist movement among religious quarters.

Latin America has recently become the scene of sharp social and political clashes. Reactionary circles, which, with US support, have managed to establish dictatorial regimes in a number of the region's countries, are staging reprisals against patriots, subjecting them to torture and killing them, and trampling on democratic rights and principles. All this is perpetrated under the banner of protection of Christian values and the struggle against the communist threat.

However, anti-popular reactionary activities have proved unable to halt the development of the national liberation movement in Latin America. The region is in a turmoil of fighting, and the ranks of the liberation movement are constantly swelling.

Social and political practices of clerical organizations in many Latin American countries clearly show that the leftist religious movement (which, needless of say, embraces a number of trends differing in character and goals) is developing in a number of ways, including extremely radical ones. The glaring social inequality and backwardness of Latin American countries and the desperate position of the peoples there have compelled leftist groups to take notice of the discrepancy between proclaimed Christian principles and the actual position of the people and the prospects of their countries' development. Rejecting the idea of consolation and compensation in the other world, they are calling for social justice now, on this earth, and are working to promote the attainment of this goal. This is what motivates their campaign for a radical restructuring of capitalist society.

In nearly all of the regions' countries, more vigorous activity has recently been displayed by the lower echelons of the clergy,

who are raising their voices against the oppression and injustice of the bourgeois system, and advocating the socialist path of development.

In this context, it is interesting to note the turns taken by the Catholic Church in Chile. When the popular government headed by Salvador Allende was in office, the Catholic Church in Chile was obliged to advocate cooperation with the popular government and even declared socialism a just system. The plenary assembly of the Chilean Episcopate held on April 15-22, 1971, adopted a document defining the position of the Church against the background of social changes introduced by the Allende government. Though criticizing Marxism as an atheistic philosophical doctrine which allegedly sacrifices sublime values and the interests of the individual to the economic factor and the totalitarian state, it recognized the merits of socialism, which was represented as a just system wishing and capable of eliminating the vices of capitalism described in clear and harsh terms.

The document contained a number of ideas which for the Catholic Church were truly novel: the recognition of each Christian's right to choose a political party to work in, the fairly mild criticism of Marxism which merely stated the doctrine's "faults" and "imperfections"; the political independence of the Church (from any social system) was advocated; cooperation with all parties and people who wished to contribute to the building of a just and happy life in Chile was called for; a promise was made to pay attention to and try to understand and respect the opinions of all political parties; it was emphasized that clerical activity should be separated from that of political parties.[1] This shift in the position of the Chilean Episcopate, even if not strictly voluntary, was welcomed by the democratic and socialist forces of the country where a large part of the population is religious.

In 1972, the First Latin American Congress of the Christians for Socialism Movement held in Chile adopted an appeal calling on all Christians in Latin America to launch a campaign

[1] *La Documentation catholique,* 19 September 1972, col. 823-33.

for liberating the continent from imperialism and resolutely combating neo-colonialism and reformism. Socialism, the statement read, is the only way for our continent to abolish capitalist and imperialist oppression for all times.

The differences existing among the clergy and political organizations affiliated with the Church and their vacillations in the struggle against the right-wing menace undoubtedly helped create conditions for the establishment of Pinochet's dictatorship. However, as the anti-popular regime began to show its true colours, stratification within the Catholic Church in Chile began to grow. Accusing the junta of violating basic human rights many clergymen raised their voices in defence of the poor and condemned the regime's tyranny and use of torture; they also began to help conceal political and trade-union activists and assist political prisoners and their families. Under pressure from the people and the lower-ranking clergy, the Catholic Church resolutely came out in defence of human rights and those who were persecuted, were suffering in prisons or have been compelled to leave their country. The Episcopate passed a resolution against the use of torture, the arbitrariness of military tribunals, etc.

This new and more radical position of a number of religious organizations provoked dissatisfaction of the right-wing church leaders. Voicing his disagreement with the Episcopate's resolution, Bishop Tagle of Valparaiso delivered a sermon which likened the country to a sick man whose leg had to be amputated, while Bishop Fresno of the North Chilean Diocese even described the military junta as a "godsend".

And yet, most of the region's clergy, especially its lower echelons, oppose fascist dictatorships and terrorist regimes which use military force to violate basic human rights.

A certain segment of the clergy, in particular that in rural areas, even takes part in the peasants' guerilla warfare against the large landowners. Cases are known where clergymen headed guerilla detachments. It is this segment of the clergy that has contributed to the victory of the revolution in Nicaragua and is now rendering assistance to the popular struggle in El Salvador and Guatemala. The foreign press reported at least 20

Salvadoran priests to be fighting arms in hand on the side of the patriotic forces led by the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front.

A substantial number of the members of the Catholic Church in Nicaragua welcomed the uprising led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front against the odious Somoza regime and helped organize action among the town and rural poor. After the revolution, several clergymen were given important government posts, which proved that the revolutionary government was not only willing to guarantee freedom of worship but wished to involve religious leaders in the work to effect the revolutionary transformation of society.

In the summer of 1980, a delegation of the Nicaraguan Church travelled to Rio de Janeiro for a meeting with Pope John Paul II, who was on a visit to Brazil. The objective of the delegation was to give the Pontiff a message of greeting from the country's government and the Sandinista National Liberation Front, which stressed that at the time of Somoza's dictatorship, the Nicaraguan Church was active in exposing the terror and repressions taking place in the country. At present, the message read, when the people are building a new society where peace, fraternity and justice will rule, the Church is acting on the side of the people. The message expressed the hope that the Church would continue to support the process of national renewal. Indeed, despite certain difficulties, the majority of the country's clergy continue to follow this course, even though on his visit to Nicaragua Pope John Paul II exhorted the patriotically-minded clergy, specifically, the four ministers of the Sandinista government, to stop this "secular", "worldly" activity and even threatened to defrock them.

Members of the clergy in other Latin American countries also advocate a more democratic public life and the releasing of political prisoners, and oppose the atrocities perpetrated by anti-popular regimes. In Argentina, prominent members of the Catholic Church have contributed to crippling the position and, in the long run, overthrowing the military junta by their vigorous opposition to its terrorist practises.

As a rule, resistance of religious organizations to anti-popular

policies is prompted by pressure from the masses and conveys the latter's opinions and demands. Evidence of this is the rather determined action of the Guatemalan Church against the sway of violence in the country. A special declaration noted the unbelievable scope of terror, torture and assassinations which are a feature of life there. The Church sharply denounced the ruling circles' deceit of the public and persecution of citizens.

Processes of stratification within religious organizations in Latin America are also under way in the Christian Democratic movement, which is playing no small part in some of the regional countries' religious and political life. There, too, differences of opinion on key political issues have become apparent. A trend is emerging within this movement which really promotes the interests of the majority of people, justice, freedom and democracy. Representing the views of rank-and-file members of the Christian Democratic movement, its leaders are prepared to pool efforts with socialists, Communists and other leftist political groups.

This tendency is most clearly seen in the reluctance of a large part of Christian Democrats to collaborate with US imperialist circles and the local oligarchy. El Salvador is a case in point.

Roberto Lara Velado, the founder of El Salvador's Christian Democratic Party and its first General Secretary, stated that the killings perpetrated in the country with US assistance have nothing in common with either democracy or Christianity. Incidentally, before he was killed by hired assassins, Archbishop of San Salvador, Oscar Romero, resolutely spoke out against the military support rendered by the USA to the anti-popular junta. Proof of this is his posthumously published letter to President Carter in which he censured the atrocities perpetrated by the junta and the American military advisers in El Salvador.

Similar ideas were voiced by Christian Democrats at the November 1980 Session of the First International Christian Conference for Political Responsibility towards El Salvador where the Revolutionary-Democratic Front leadership declined the mediation offered by the European Christian Democratic

parties, specifically, by Holland, in searching for a compromize on the composition of the government. Hector Silva, representative of the popular Social-Christian movement, which forms part of the Revolutionary-Democratic Front, said that El Salvador had only one alternative—the popular one, and only one decision was possible in the country—that reached by the people.

Speaking on behalf of Chile's left-wing Christian forces, Antonio Caballo stated that if Dutch Christian Democrats really wished to help El Salvador, they should take steps to prevent US interference and protect the independence of the people of El Salvador. At the conclusion of the conference, vigorous opposition was voiced to US attempts to force the democratic and popular forces to cease fighting.

At present, the situation in El Salvador is very tense indeed. The patriotic forces comprising the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front have been obliged to take up arms to resist internal and outside reaction which is committing criminal acts in that long-suffering country.

Information released by the leadership of El Salvador's Catholic Church shows that over the past few years, thousands of people in El Salvador have fallen victim to the criminal regime and its American patrons.

The sensible and progressively-minded members of the country's religious organizations realize that it is not the mythical "communist menace" but severe class oppression, unemployment, plunder of the national wealth, poverty, repressions by the authorities and American military intervention that are the main causes of the people's desperate position. Exposing the roots of this situation, and, consequently, of the political evolution of a large part of the clergy, in an interview back in October 1971, Bishop Pedro Arnoldo Aparicio, stated with indignation that in the state treasury, as well as in commerce, the industries and in other fields, corruption was rampant, and exploiters did not seem to be guided by any considerations other than those of personal gain. The wealthy and the powerful were getting rich through the blood, sweat and tears of the humble people.

Reprinting this interview, the bourgeois press of El Salvador hastened to point out that it was only a statement of the

Bishop's personal opinions. However, the people of El Salvador were aware of the justice of the bishop's words and wholeheartedly subscribed to his point of view. It is for this reason that with the passage of time, more and more members of the clergy have begun to voice similar opinions. A document adopted by the Church of El Salvador in early 1981 contained sharp criticism of the bloody practices of internal reaction and its imperialist patrons. The document demanded that military supplies to the government of El Salvador used to suppress the people's resistance be terminated.

It is only natural that the logic of the political struggle and the need to oppose the anti-popular policies of internal and external reactionaries prompt sensible religious leaders not only to revise their attitude to Communists but also to recognize the expediency of collaborating with them. Condemning reactionary elements for the assassination of Bishop Romero, the General Vicar of San Salvador advocated joint action by Marxists and Christians.[1]

A tendency towards more radical action is clearly discernible in the so-called New Mexican Catholic Church. A few years ago, a new trend emerged within the Catholic Church of Mexico, whose adherents call themselves representatives of "purified Christianity". They maintain a critical stand towards the bourgeois system, advocate the need to improve the conditions of the working people and establish a regime of social justice, and demand a drastic restructuring of Mexican society.

An interesting paper of the situation in the country has been published by Mexico's episcopal commission. It appeared under the heading "Justice in Mexico", but, as the press noted, "Injustice in Mexico" would have been a more appropriate title. The information collected by the commission which prepared the report throws light on the difficult position of the working class, subordination of the trade-union movement to the interests of bourgeoisie, and the country's being under the influence of American imperialism in many respects.

Followers of the New Mexican Catholic Church have recently

[1] *L'Humanité*, 2 April 1980.

been very outspoken on a number of pressing political problems, expressing strong disapproval of the authorities' repressive measures against the students' movement. Archbishop Adalberto Almeida of the Chihuahua State made an official statement printed in the *Excelsior* newspaper of Mexico City declaring that the people's armed actions were in protest against violence which the bourgeois state has raised to the status of law.

Ideas of the New Mexican Catholic Church have found their way into the Mexican Jesuit Society, whose members have recently become more active in criticizing the country's internal situation. The Jesuit leader Enrique A. Gutiérrez, said in a statement to the press that those who produce the bulk of the country's wealth are doomed to increasingly dramatic impoverishment. Under the prevailing conditions of injustice the clergy was naturally on the side of the downtrodden and would remain with the people in their struggle for emancipation.

An analysis of the content and evolution of the doctrine of the New Mexican Catholic Church, whose followers form a minority of the country's ministers of faith, must consider a wide range of controversial factors. They recognize, to a degree, the need for attaining social justice for the toiling worker, but some use this principle to disguise the pursuit of narrowly clerical goals: to consolidate the present position of the Church and secure its future.

Some clergymen are simply afraid of losing their following and hope to avoid this by adapting religious concepts to the conditions prevailing in Mexico, i.e., the growth of popular discontent with the existing system.

The more conscientious and progressive representatives of the New Church are sincerely concerned about the destiny of the country and the people. Their idea of a better future for their country is profound social, economic and political changes. Among these people, an important role is played by Bishop Sergio Méndez Arceo of Cuernavaca, who has publicly condemned the capitalist system stating that only the building of socialism in Mexico will make it possible to abolish social injustice and successfully tackle other national issues. Sergio Méndez Arceo is a vigorous champion of the political rights of workers,

peasants and young people. His political integrity and uncompromizing stand have aroused hostility among reactionary circles and the majority of the clergy within the "traditional" Mexican Church.

It is largely as a result of the upsurge in the people's revolutionary liberation struggle that radical tendencies are more openly operating in clerical circles, and that the clergy is growing more socially conscious recognizing the need for deep social changes. Facts show that quite a few religious leaders have come to realize that the bourgeois system is unable to secure justice, equality, universal welfare and real independence for all members of society. Church organizations have found themselves involved in revolutionary processes and the struggle for the objectives advanced by the working people.

In mid-February 1980, the National Conference of Brazilian Bishops spoke out for agrarian reform, stressing the unfairness of the existing system of land use, under which 42 per cent of arable land belonged to less than one per cent of the population.

Participants in the first National Congress of Catholic Priests of Ecuador held in the winter of 1970 in Quito denounced the oppression and exploitation that permeat the capitalist system and which are incompatible with Christian teaching. They stated, among other things, that there could be no question of freedom, democracy and respect for Christian dogmas when the majority of Latin Americans, including the citizens of Ecuador, were labouring under oppression. The capitalist system, they said, aggravates poverty, ignorance, and illiteracy since they do not threaten the continued existence of the capitalist system.

The Ecuadoran clergy also censured the role played by the official Catholic Church in helping capitalism to survive. The Congress resolution outlined measures to be carried out in order to promote the emancipation of man, specifically, to foster the type of mentality necessary to change the social system.

Participants in the International Theological Seminar representing 42 Latin American, Asian and African countries held in São Paulo in March 1980 denounced the capitalist system—

"the common enemy of all people".

The anti-capitalist orientation of left-wing religious elements is most apparent when followers of the so-called "rebel church" in Latin America take up arms against anti-popular regimes. The first "rebel priests" appeared at the time of the Cuban Revolution. Among Fidel Castro's soldiers was Jesuit Guillermo Sardiñas, one of the first Catholicñ prelates to support the revolution. He was appointed chaplain of the Insurgent Army. Another famous representative of the "rebel church", Camilo Torres, fought in the ranks of Colombian guerillas and was killed in February 1966 in a skirmish between the guerillas and a punitive detachment.

The list of examples of this kind could be continued. However, the important point is that adherents to the "rebel church" accept both peaceful and armed means of transforming society.

The position of "rebels clad in cassock" is not easy. The entire propaganda and repressive apparatus of local and international reaction, which uses all means within its power to suppress anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist actions, is against them. The official Church showers them with abuse and censure. In the autumn of 1984, the Vatican made a special lengthy statement denouncing the "theology of emancipation" and accusing it of "Marxism", the use of "anti-Christian methods", and "class hatred". Thus the official Catholic Church demonstrated once again where its allegiance lies and what movements it wishes to constrain.

Right-wing Latin American regimes have their own way of "dealing" with "rebel priests". Many have been tortured and some were killed, including Archbishop Romero in El Salvador, who was assassinated by right terrorists for his conviction that the danger to his country stemmed not from communism but from blatant social injustice. Romero even stated that the main source of the violence that had swept the country was the repressions undertaken by the authorities. He said that when there would be no violence on the part of the authorities the insurgents would not resort to violence either, for the latter was only a consequence of the sinister policies which should be

condemned for their anti-Christian character.

Repressions and terror are powerless to stop a liberation movement prompted by objective causes. There is reason to expect that the progressive trends within religious organizations in capitalist countries will continue to develop despite the opposition of right-wing elements irritated by the fact that members of an institution which has traditionally helped maintain the status quo are demanding drastic changes in the social structure. The logic of the movement and the dynamics of the popular revolutionary process compel many of the institutions and organizations taking part in them to become more radical.

Throughout the world, and above all in the developing countries, leftist religious elements have shown increased vigour in their action. At present, ministers of religion of the Third World belonging to different denominations frequently voice their support for the people's struggle against all forms of oppression and exploitation by the reactionary landlords, and capitalist and imperialist circles.

Here is what Nguyen Van Binh, Archbishop of Saigon, said in an interview with a Catholic journalist immediately after the liberation of South Vietnam. Explaining why his Church was prepared to closely cooperate with the revolutionary authorities, he cited the following: the new government has abolished foreign rule and the exploitation of man by man, and is building a new society free from the rule of the rich minority over the poor majority. Van Binh believed that these goals were perfectly consistent with the norms of the faith and the spirit of the Gospel.

In those countries where the national liberation struggle has intensified, religious leaders are frequently obliged, under pressure from the majority of church-goers, to dissociate their actions from the policies of reactionary regimes which spread violence and terror. In the autumn of 1980, South Korea and the world at large were swept up in a wave of protest against the death sentence pronounced against Kim Tai Chung, the leader of the country's democratic movement. The Catholic Church of South Korea appealed to the authorities for a pardon. In May 1981, 30 priests in South Korea went on a hunger strike

as a sign of protest against the country's dictatorship and its bloody policies, and in defense of democratic freedoms.

Leftist religious groups in the non-socialist countries are characterized by the determination to dissociate themselves from the ideology and policies of the ruling regimes. Many left-wing religious leaders believe that the Church should revise its attitude to private property and stop treating it as an "indisputable value", and that the believers should not wage an isolated campaign for specifically Christian progress but must join other forces traversing the common path of progress.

Similar processes are under way among the Moslem clergy. Many of its members in Syria, Afghanistan, Libya, Algeria, Egypt and Morocco are resisting the attempts of imperialist and reactionary circles to spearhead the action of Moslem organizations and movements against socialism, progress and peace, and have displayed considerable interest in the position of Moslems in the USSR.

Let us consider the process of stratification among the Moslem clergy in Afghanistan, which intensified after it had become clear that the "danger" to Islam allegedly existing in that country was nothing more than a myth spread by right-wing clericals. The theological conference, the first in the country's history, held in July 1980, proclaimed unconditional support for the government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and the measures it introduced to promote the people's well-being. Over 800 delegates, who represented many of the country's provinces, discussed the position of the clergy in Afghanistan and its potential contribution to the country's consolidation and development. The Conference approved the decree of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan Revolutionary Council on establishing the Chief Department of Islamic Matters within the Council of Ministers, and passed a decision on the formation of the Supreme Council of Theologians and the Clergy.

The conference resolution denounced the actions of imperialism and internal and external reaction aimed at undermining the gains of the Afghan people and the April Revolution. It stated that respect for Islam was one of the founding principles of the DRA. In September 1985, the DRA government policies

were strongly supported by the so-called Great Jirga—a congress of the country's prominent people, including members of the Moslem clergy.

The new tendencies among the clergy adhering to a progressive political stand are a result of the work of the DRA leadership to promote the development of the country and improve the living conditions of the people. These segments of the clergy have declared that support of the government is the religious duty of each Afghan Moslem.

Another important factor helping Afghan clergymen, including participants in the Theological Conference, to evolve a politically progressive stand is, as the resolution pointed out, the profound respect for the national traditions and customs invariably displayed by the DRA government. All Afghan Moslems have had a chance to see for themselves that the country has real freedom of worship.[1]

It is these social and political realities that have won over an increasing number of clergymen in Afghanistan to the side of the popular government. Naturally, this shift of views is provided with a religious substantiation by the Moslem clergy.

Support for the new government is not restricted to declarations. The resistance to the aggressors and counter-revolutionaries is gaining momentum in Afghanistan. Volunteer detachments comprised of activists from the People's Democratic Party and youth organizations have been formed in cities and towns to take part in the fighting going on in the provinces. People's militia units have been set up everywhere and include members of the clergy. The truth that the struggle against rebels and bandits who murder children, women and civilians and burn schools is in fact the struggle against the enemies of Islam is gradually being realized by an increasing number of people who consider themselves defenders of Islam. The measures introduced by the revolutionary government to impove the situation of the working people in Afghanistan, the campaign against illiteracy, and a clear and consistent stand taken by the government on questions of the faith have combined to cut the

[1] See: *Pravda,* 2 July 1980.

ground from under the feet of the counter-revolutionaries.

The progressive political position of many members of the Moslem clergy in Afghanistan is provoking a fiercely negative response on the part of secular and religious reaction. Counter-revolutionaries have declared a campaign of terror against the mullahs who have come over to the side of the people.

But even terror is powerless to check the growth of political awareness of Moslems, including clergymen. That this process will continue to make headway is ensured by the successes scored in the building of a new life in Afghanistan and the competent and principled government policy with respect to religion, which is aimed, among other things, at correcting the mistakes made in the past.

Let us return to other leftist religious trends. Frequently, they emerge as a result of a fusion of socialist and religious ideas, since quite a few of their followers advocate a revolutionary way of dealing with the social antagonisms of exploiter society. Thus, the movement of Critical Christians in France, which in the summer of 1975 held its first national assembly in Versailles, maintains that for Christians, the struggle between classes is not only a fact but also a matter of choice and a moral need; followers of this trend believe that the oppressed must be helped, and that the Church must break all contacts with the oppressive bourgeois power.[1]

It is only to be expected that, campaigning against the cruel bourgeois "society of money", believers with working-class background regard Marxists as their natural allies. This is true of many denominations in many countries. Nearly 40,000 young Catholics who assembled in Paris in the summer of 1974 declared that they would act in conjunction with Communists in order to change bourgeois society and, remaining believers, build socialism.[2]

The same ideas were voiced in May 1980 by the 12th National Congress of the French Workers' Catholic Action held in Bordeaux. The Congress gave a detailed analysis of the topical problems of working-class and trade-union movement, and

[1] *La Croix,* 12 June 1975.
[2] *L'Humanité,* 1 July 1974.

confirmed the intention of the members of the Catholic Action to take part in the class struggle in the spirit of working-class solidarity.

Sharp criticism was levelled against the practices of bourgeois society which have given rise to unemployment with the enormous material and moral damage it entails for the working class. The Congress named the system of private ownership as the chief social cause of exploitation of the working class, unemployment, poverty, racism and repression. It also clearly outlined the way to combat conditions humiliating to man; i.e. joint struggle of all the working people to create prerequisites for the establishment of a socialist society.[1]

Not infrequently, having become involved in the revolutionary struggle, members of Catholic organizations, join the communist party.

The past few years have witnessed the emergence of quite a number of opposition groups ("Critical Christians", "Marxist Christians", "Christian Socialists"), which take a resolutely critical stance with respect to the bourgeois system and the official Church. Among the more important ones is the Christians for Socialism movement, whose activities have evoked a broad response in the bourgeois countries of both the Old and the New World.

The movement originated during the Popular Unity government in Chile and from the very start, the spring of 1971, advocated a strategic alliance between Christians and Marxists in the campaign to liberate Latin America. It maintains that Christians can accept Marxism as a method and pool efforts with Marxists when tackling economic and political issues without renouncing or questioning their faith.

Having drawn up a programme which offered efficient ways of dealing with urgent social and political problems and scored a number of successes in the struggle for justice and the establishment of the people's social and national independence and freedom, the movement Christians for Socialism soon spread throughout the continent. It is indicative that its first Latin

[1] *Ibid.*, 5 May 1980.

American congress held in the spring of 1972 in Santiago (Chile) named as its natural ally the communist movement as the most consistent champion of working-class interests and of a better future for all peoples. The congress called on Christian revolutionaries to form strategic alliances with Marxists for the purpose of disseminating socialism in Latin America.

The Christians for Socialism movement was spreading so fast that already in April 1975, the first world conference of its members was held in Quebec (Canada). Though the movement reflects the specific features of each given country, on the whole its members view socialism "as a process of transforming all structures and the culture of capitalist society accomplished through the struggle of the working classes, of abolishing all relations of domination and exploitation and the establishment of a society in which the people will become creators of their history".[1]

The social basis of religious trends opposing the bourgeois system is broad, but by and large their political platform has a distinctly anti-imperialist character and sets the building of a new, socialist society as their objective. Their members are usually inspired by a particular interpretation of the essence of religion, and especially Christianity, which is viewed as incompatible with any form of oppression, including capitalism. They advocate freeing Christianity from the "ideological superstructure", giving it an injection of fresh revolutionary energy and promoting its realization through the principles of socialism, the struggle and creative activity of the working class and all the working people towards social emancipation and the flourishing of mankind.

It goes without saying that not infrequently, the way members of such movements understand socialism differs from the scientific, Marxist-Leninist teaching on the subject. Nevertheless these movements do a great deal to help involve believers in the struggle against imperialism and for socialist ideals. The scope and depth of the left-wing radical religious movement are determined by the strength of the liberation and working-class

[1] G. Girardi, *Christiani per il socialismo: perche?* Assisi, 1975, p. 21.

movements and the influence and prestige of the communist party of the country in question.

In January 1977, the Christians for Socialism movement of Italy held its third national conference. Taking part were about 800 delegates representing all regions of the country, as well as guests from South America, Africa and other continents and delegations of the Italian Communist Party and other left-wing parties.

Participants in the Conference voiced their wholehearted solidarity with the peoples of the world engaged in the liberation struggle. The final document of the conference emphasized the need for building a new, more humane society following the road of socialism. The Conference urged all left-wing forces to act together and openly compare points of view.

The collection *Christians and Revolution. Convergence and Theology* brought out by the leftist Protestant organization, the Christian Peace Conference (West Germany), stated that the decisive element in the work of left-wing radical religious movements is the wish to see "the church and Christians on the side of the right cause in the struggle against imperialism, which is responsible for famine, poverty and other misfortunes and is also the chief threat to peace".[1]

Marxists and all champions of democracy and socialism attach considerable importance to the politically progressive views advocated by religious circles, especially in those countries with a large church-going population where believers have yet to be drawn into the struggle against capitalism and imperialism, and for building a new, socialist society.

The historical approach to social phenomena requires that the new features in the positions of various religious groups and organizations be taken into consideration. This is a major prerequisite for entering into an alliance with believers from among the working classes.

[1] *Christen und Revolution. Konvergenz und Theologie,* Cologne, 1971, p. 7.

On the Dialectics of Democratic Movements and Their Ideologies

Marxism-Leninism has always sought to fully reveal the objective meaning and historical content of mass movements, irrespective of the ideological purport of the slogans and concepts they advance. Historical experience has shown that the relationship between a social movement and ideology is often quite contradictory. A study of the methods applied in their analysis by the founders of Marxism-Leninism can be quite educational. Specifically, Lenin's article *Two Utopias* on the Russian populist movement (although direct analogies would be out of place here since the objects of research are different) may prove very helpful in a study of the relationship between mass movements and religious consciousness.

Expounding the dialectics of mass movements and their ideologies, Lenin based his analysis on Engels's idea, set forth in his introduction to the first German edition of Marx's *The Poverty of Philosophy:* "...What formally may be economically incorrect, may all the same be correct from the point of view of world history."[1] This statement was made with reference to utopian socialism.

Proceeding from this idea, Lenin evaluated the meaning of the Narodnik (populist) utopia in Russia (adding parenthetically that this refers not exclusively to Russia but to a whole number of Asian states in which bourgeois revolutions began to be accomplished in the 20th century): "Narodnik *democracy,* while fallacious from the formal economic point of view, is correct from the *historical* point of view; *this* democracy, while fallacious as a socialist utopia, is *correct* in terms of the peculiar historically conditioned democratic struggle of the peasant masses which is an inseparable element of the bourgeois transformation and a condition for its complete victory."[2]

[1] Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy,* "Preface to the First German Edition" by Frederick Engels, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1984, p. 13.

[2] V. I. Lenin, "Two Utopias", *Collected Works,* Vol. 18, 1973, p. 358.

Lenin also wrote that "the Marxists must carefully extract the sound and valuable kernel of the sincere, resolute, militant democracy of the peasant masses from the husk of Narodnik utopias".[1] This affirmation of the need to get at the "valuable kernel of democracy", casting away the fallacious ideological husk, provides a sound methodological basis for the analysis of contemporary mass social movements conducted under a religious banner, despite their social and ideological heterogeneity and specific features. Naturally, it should be remembered that the "husk" has a religious and mystic character, and religious utopias are popular among different social and class groups and huge masses of people. Therefore, it would never do to either underestimate the objective democratic, emancipatory potential of these movements, or to transfer, consciously or unconsciously, their valuable features to the mystic ideological "husk".

The emergence of mass progressive social movements in a religious guise, and especially the fact that their followers are often guided by modernist interpretations of the faith, frequently prompts researchers, including leftists abroad, to see this as a change of principle in the very essence of religion and therefore to declare that the time has come to revize the fundamental Marxist concepts of religion as a form of public consciousness. The idea is sometimes advanced that at present, religious ideology itself is a "fermenting" and revolutionizing factor motivating people to fight against the social injustice of the capitalist world.

Revisionists who have abandoned Marxism, including Ernst Bloch, Roger Garaudy, Leszek Kolakowski and Ernst Fischer, use this as a pretext to reject materialist views and advocate a new interpretation of the meaning of religion as a humanistic and revolutionary system, and even to suggest a simple combination of the "best parts" of religion and Marxism, which is sure to settle all the revolutionary problems man has faced or will face in the future.

These circles are also elaborating new versions of "God-build-

[1] Ibid., p. 359.

ing" which identify religion and the faith with the entire humanistic potential built up by mankind in the course of its history. Let us consider the concept expounded by Roger Garaudy in his book *Appeal to the Living*.

According to Garaudy, the service of Marxist philosophy to religion is merely setting religion free from its role as "opium for the people". Garaudy understands this function as exclusively the connection of religion with the state apparatus and the powerful elite in this world. Whenever the Church attempts to implement its "social doctrine" or the "policy stemming from the Holy Scriptures", it, Garaudy believes, turns back into a conservative political force and is rejected, with good ground, as "opium for the people".

Proceeding from this, the author insistently recommends the revival of the pure and true faith (interpreted rather broadly), which is in fact associated with the entire heritage acquired by humanity throughout its history.

Meanwhile, the modernist changes in religious systems and the personally honest and sober-minded stance taken by some church leaders on the pressing problems of today are powerless to remedy the fallacy of religious ideology or affect the way religion mirrors the world. Dialectical materialism cannot be reconciled to any irrational world outlook, including religion. Marxism does not merely reject but uncovers the source of this distorted reflection of the world, of life in man's consciousness and the facets of social being which engender this double vision of the world, and offers ways to overcome it.

Persons who have abandoned the Marxist stand, who ignore the dialectical-materialist explanation of the processes under way in contemporary religious consciousness and modern religious organizations in the non-socialist countries usually find difficulty in reconciling the conservative social function of religion and progressive ideas and trends within a number of religious organizations. The "traditional Marxist" view of the faith, it is alleged, maintains that believers have no role to play in liberation movements, and the emergence among them of progressive, and especially revolutionary, ideas and actions is impossible.

What they fail to realize is that not a single doctrine, no matter how refined and subtle it may be, can suppress the natural and ever-present desire of the working masses to improve the material conditions of their life and to protect their vital interests and rights. Here, religious considerations cannot but play a secondary part.

The controversial situation that has taken shape within the single religious framework due to unevenness in the development of different aspects of consciousness of a large number of believers (progressive political views co-existing with an extremely conservative world outlook) can be explained, among other things, by the fact that the different sides of public consciousness relate in a different way to major social factors and the economic system. Closest to them are political views, which for this reason react more rapidly, are the quickest to change and exert the greatest impact on objective circumstances.

As concerns the religious aspects of a believer's world-view, they are farther removed from socio-economic relations and therefore require more time to change.

Analyzing the conditions under which progressive movements in religious guise are most likely to emerge, one must not overlook that feature of the religious form of public consciousness in non-socialist countries which Marx discussed and whose presence is revealed by a study of any more or less developed religious system throughout man's history: the fact that religious views are at the same time a reflection of the squalor of exploiter society and a protest against it. The natural desire of religious people to shake off their oppression finds a peculiar outlet in religion, too, for its ideas are spread throughout large segments of the population. Therefore it would be erroneous to characterize a movement or trend as anti-revolutionary and reactionary merely because it originated among believers.

The Marxist evaluation of religious movements always rests on a concrete and historical analysis of their social, class content. It is important to approach each trend individually finding out what ambitions and interests it conveys. It is also important that the universal humane principles of fraternity, equality and goodwill advocated by religion have aspects which under certain

conditions may be a valuable contribution to the general democratic movement. Finally, for various reasons, such as a low level of self-awareness, ignorance of scientific theory, the influence of a given country's traditions and religious upbringing, etc., democratic, progressive impulses and intentions may assume a religious form, which, contrary to what revisionists assert, is not organic to the actual motives of social protest. Such a situation has recently evolved in a number of bourgeois and developing countries, where, secularizing religious ideals, believers are fighting for their worldly and even revolutionary content.

This fully bears out Lenin's idea that political protest in religious guise is something all peoples pass through at a certain stage of their development.

The contradiction between the religious form of public movements and their social content originates in the fact that huge masses have recently been set in motion, and the people (in developing countries this refers, above all, to the peasants) who have for ages been oppressed and downtrodden are now bringing their prejudices and weaknesses to the revolution. Obviously, even despite their religious form, such movements are essentially progressive. Communists support and assist them, cooperating with them in the common struggle against imperialism and social reaction. It is this struggle that is capable of eliminating the chief cause of the existence of religion and its social foundation—the exploiter system of relations.

Neither can one consider sound another concept advanced by certain authors abroad, that of "pluralism of ideological values", which associates the existence of progressive ideas and actions with Marxism and modernized Christianity.

It is maintained that one can no longer proceed from a "dogmatically negative" and "metaphysical" view of religion's eternal and unchangeable essence, and that at different times, the role of church bodies were not the same. The latter statement is undoubtedly correct; what is not is the assumption that Marxists reject point blank everything that has a link to religion, beginning with ideas shaped as religious ones to historical so-

cial actions of believers. Marxism views religion as a certain reflection of opinions and ideas of different strata of society and different peoples. The presence in religious systems of such universal human values as honesty and decency, condemnation of murder and theft reflects the moral experience of mankind. These ideas are as close to Marxists as they are to all honest people, and, needless to say, they are able to motivate believers to important civic actions.

Neither are Marxists-Leninists guilty of a nihilistic attitude to cultural heritage and the democratic traditions of the past and of national liberation movements, even if they were upheld and advanced by religious people. Let us review two major historical events whose anniversaries fell in the 1980s and whose essence was distorted in pursuance of religious apologetics. The first is the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kulikovo (September 1980) in which the Russian army smashed the troops of the Tartar-Mongol Golden Horde in Kulikovo Field, and the 500th birth anniversary of Martin Luther (November 1983).

During the preparations for and the celebration of the anniversary of the Battle of Kulikovo, Soviet scholars and the press analysed all major aspects and consequences of that turning point in Russian history, an event that paved the way for Russia's emancipation from foreign oppression which, to use Marx's phrase, was "not only crushing but dishonouring and withering the very soul of the people that fell its prey". We now have sufficient information about the circumstances that enabled the Grand Duke of Muscovy, Dmitry Ivanovich, to stand up to the Golden Horde: ancient Russia was being increasingly united around Moscow, and the idea of centralization came to outweigh narrow parochial interests. The objective analysis of the actual course of events contained in Soviet scientific writings and journalism reveals that credit should be given to the patriotic activities of the Russian Church of that period and to its leaders, especially Metropolitan Alexii, Prior of the Trinity Monastery near Moscow, and Sergii of Radonezh, both of whom made an important contribution to the liberation of Russian lands from the Tartar-Mongol yoke. But the matter

at issue is the patriotic activity of the Russian Church (which continued in later epochs, including the Great Patriotic War of 1941-45), not strictly religious actions. The absence of any inherent connection between the two has been mirrored by the following, in many respects symbolic, fact.

The celebrated Russian warriors Peresvet and Oslyabya (the former has gone down in the nation's history as the man who accepted the challenge of Telebei, the formidable warrior of the Golden Horde, and entered into deathly combat with him), were monks. The two men took part in the popular struggle with the permission of the Prior of the Trinity Monastery but contrary to religious injunctions which forbid monks to fight or even to carry arms.

It is obvious that participation in the patriotic liberation struggle was prompted not by religious precepts but by the upsurge of patriotic feeling and the common rush to the defence of national independence and a just cause.

Other aspects of the question of the objective and unbiassed approach of Marxists-Leninists to the historical past, even when it assumed a religious form, can be highlighted through their assessment of the work of Martin Luther, a prominent figure of the Reformation. To mark his 500th birth anniversary, the GDR set up a special committee chaired by Erich Honecker, General Secretary of the SUPG Central Committee and Chairman of the GDR State Council, which organized a number of international colloquiums, conferences and exhibitions and published books and essays on the subject.

The historical significance of Luther's work is linked with the Reformation, which was a prologue of sorts to the bourgeois revolution. Luther was one of the first to lay the way for those changes which became ripe in many German principalities and other European states during the time when the feudal system began to collapse and bourgeois revolutions were accomplished. He made a substantial contribution to shaping the main ideas of the 16th century. Even before, thinkers, artists, scholars and men of letters had made attempts to break out of the feudal system's spiritual imprisonment and abandon feudal canons. So, when an obscure monk wrote down his famous theses de-

claring that "the Church needs to be reformed" and nailed them to the church doors in Wittenberg, he gave impetus to a movement which promoted social progress. From a position of religion and reformation, Luther supplied answers to the pressing questions of his day, which was why the nobility took up arms against him.

At the same time, it is of major importance that the common people who adopted his ideas and views associated them with far-reaching and radical social and political plans. Fusing with the mass anti-feudal movement, these ideas engendered those revolutionary consequences that reached their summit in the Peasant War in Germany and which, needless to say, went far beyond what Luther had intended to attain.

Luther's tragedy was his failure to eliminate the contradiction between his role as an initiator of a mass revolutionary movement and inability to grasp its laws and development trends. For the sake of objectively evaluating the historical significance of Luther's activity against the background of mounting social contradictions and the transition from the feudal system to capitalism, it should be stressed that the processes of revolutionary differentiation and growing political radicalism, which reached their height in the Peasant War, would have been impossible but for the Reformation, which was launched by Luther.

The Reformation was a complex historical phenomenon. Its most important feature was probably the fact that considering the conditions of the time, transformation of the Church had to be the first step of any more or less far-reaching social change. It mirrored both the need for bourgeois reform and the revolutionary protest of the masses whose result depended, in the final analysis, on the power of the revolutionary movement and the alignment of class forces. Even after the peasants were defeated in the Peasant War, Luther continued to work to promote the Reformation.

A concrete historical approach to historical events characteristic of Marxism-Leninism necessitates mentioning all positive elements, even in such a strictly religious undertaking as the translation of the Bible of the time of the Reformation. Inci-

dentally, 1983 was declared the year of the Bible in the GDR. Frederick Engels described Luther's Bible as a powerful weapon of the nascent popular movement. Indeed, no other book was at that time able to do so much to unify the dialects of the German principalities.

In short, it is always better to give credit where credit is due, and no one can deny the significance of Luther's humanistic, social and ethical views.

Speaking at the inaugural meeting of the Committee on the Celebration of Martin Luther's Jubilee, Erich Honecker said that the actions and ideas of all those who had promoted the development of world culture, irrespective of their class status, have always found support and understanding among Marxists. "In conformity with our outlook," he said, "we must describe the objective, actual course of history in its dialectics. To understand history as a history of the class struggle does not at all imply a limited outlook. Such understanding means real insight into the essence of things."[1]

Studying the work of Luther, Marxists have always opposed the use of his name for religious apologetics, and even for directly reactionary purposes (for instance, as proof of the need for a union of the throne and the altar), but neither have they ignored the limitations of his views as far as his class stand and world outlook are concerned.

The wish to preserve the entire humanistic and progressive heritage of mankind, and to assimilate and objectively assess it from the working-class ideological stand makes it all the more important for historical research to throw light on the relationship between theology and the policies of social movements, their mutual influence and their links with contemporary conflicts and developments.

Such research has never yet failed to prove that in all cases, the religious form of progressive social movements determined by the masses' backward social consciousness, the features of the countrys' social and economic situation and the strength of traditions prevailing in it, cannot but be historically tran-

[1] *Neues Deutschland,* 14, 15 June 1980.

sient. At a certain stage it must inevitably clash with the content of these progressive movements and become an obstacle in the way of their advance. In the end, each progressive public movement sheds the ideological shell disguising its real goals and evolves a new consciousness adequate to its real content. This is a law of history.

But even in its updated form, religion remains a fallacious and irrational world outlook and continues to fulfil its old ideological social function, which, however, need not be expressed in reactionary political activity. Religion was not a reactionary political force in the pre-class society, does not, as a rule, play this role in socialist society, and even in bourgeois society, a number of religious organizations do not engage in reactionary political activity. What is more, religion has been, and is still used as the banner of progressive social movements. But, inasmuch as it stems from insufficient knowledge of natural and social forces, the limitations, to use the phrase of Marx and Engels, of people's relations with nature and with each other, and the absence of social ties motivating the masses to conscious and creative participation in the historical process, it cannot but restrict their social vigour.

The negative impact of religious ideology, a warped view and understanding of life, is also reflected in the role of any type of religion in consolidating and feeding other conservative or reactionary trends and developments, including nationalistic prejudices, which help divide the working people of different nationalities and obstruct their education in the spirit of proletarian internationalism. Religious intolerance, and hostility towards the "infidels" and the firm conviction that one's faith and nationality are the "chosen ones" are strikingly manifest in Judaism, which is used by Zionists to justify their chauvinist and militarist plans.

An objective and comprehensive study of modernized versions of different religions shows that they have not changed the essence of religion as an irrational and unscientific form of public consciousness which feeds groundless hopes and conceptions. Neither can they act, contrary to what revisionists of Marxism assert, as a revolutionary principle, a "ferment" which

will spontaneously abolish the oppressive system of capitalism; only the actual conditions and vital interests of believers can lead to the emergence of liberative trends within the framework of religious organizations.

That it is unreasonable to regard religious motives as self-sufficient and to ignore the actual social and political needs of the people which are subsequently expressed in religious ideas and slogans is particularly obvious from the different, and sometimes even opposed, stands taken by religious groups and organizations on urgent political issues—the campaign to preserve and promote detente, to eliminate the threat of a new world war and fight all manifestations of fascism, racism and neocolonialism. Take, for instance, the recent anti-popular war in Vietnam. Some Buddhist monks in South Vietnam collaborated with the Saigon puppets of American imperialism, while others burnt themselves in the squares of South Vietnamese towns as a sign of protest against the "dirty war" of interventionists and their henchmen in Vietnam.

Or let us consider the present situation in Nicaragua. There, reactionary Catholic clergymen have taken a stand opposing the revolutionary government and, in effect, are siding with counter-revolutionary forces. Playing on the believers' religious sentiment, right-wing clericals headed by the Archbishop of Managua encourage sabotage, incite people to open action against the popular government, bait its supporters and even directly collaborate with the CIA. But the majority of clergymen are active in the building of a new life, just as they used to do their best to help accomplish the popular Sandinista revolution.

Analyzing the process of stratification under way among the Nicaraguan clergy, M. Belyat, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* correspondent, quoted the words of a soldier of the revolutionary army who, continuing to wear his tin cross, fought against Somoza's bandits and who believes in "our poor people's God, for after the revolution, two Gods appeared in Nicaragua—poor people's God and rich people's God. And the same is true of clergymen: some serve the rich, and others the poor".[1]

[1] *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 28 August 1984.

Such facts show that the political opinions of clergymen are determined not by modified religious views as such but by economic, political and national interests and class goals. As for the members of religious organizations, depending on the mood prevailing among believers, they associate themselves with the mass progressive movement which has emerged independently of their will and wishes.

Lenin's Principle of the Unity of Marxists and Working-Class Believers in the Campaign for Social Progress

The conservative essence of religious ideology, including its updated rationalist versions, cannot hinder close cooperation between believers and Communists or their joint action to attain progressive, humanistic goals. Our dynamic epoch has both made it imperative to restructure society and establish socialist relations, and facilitated the attainment of these goals.

The lively dialogue between Communists and believers in many bourgeois and developing countries and their comprehensive practical cooperation in socialist society have made it necessary for Communists to clearly define their philosophical, theoretical and political positions.

The Marxist-Leninist methodology makes it possible to scientifically analyze the new ideological and political processes in religious circles and reveal their complex and frequently controversial character. The Marxist thought rests on the principle, thoroughly elaborated by Lenin, of the need to attain unity between Marxists and believers with a working-class background in the struggle for social progress.

Lenin studied the ideology and social functions of religion in close relationship with the more general problems of the revolutionary transformation of society. He mapped out the political course of the Party and the attitude of the communist movement towards those strata of the population who are influenced by religion. Dealing with this issue, he developed the ideas of Marx and Engels, who opposed the leftist phraseology and

"the gamble of a political war or religion".[1] Lenin wrote that patient political education of the proletariat, from frivolity and attempts to make advances to people laboring under religious delusions should be combined with vigorous action toward launching a mass revolutionary movement and promoting class struggle.

Using materialist dialectics in the analysis of religion and the ways of overcoming it, Lenin considered the problem from various angles. It is not just that the stress on religious affiliation when singling out categories serves to divert the attention "of some sections of the working class and the other democratic elements away from the urgent task of the class and revolutionary struggle to the most superficial and false bourgeois anti-clericalism".[2] Religious delusions and errors can be combated not so much by propaganda as by social practice, participation of believers in the liberation movement. Lenin fully shared Engels's opinion that "only the class struggle of the working masses could, by comprehensively drawing the widest strata of the proletariat into conscious and revolutionary social *practice* really free the oppressed masses from the yoke of religion, whereas to proclaim that war on religion was a political task of the workers' party was just anarchistic phrase-mongering".[3]

Lenin particularly stressed that attempts to explain the seemingly "moderate" stance taken by Marxism toward religion by so-called tactical considerations (meaning the wish not to frighten away, etc.) stem from failure to understand the foundations of Marxist philosophy and the inability to materialistically explain where the roots of the masses' faith and religious sentiment are to be found.

Lenin warned that a materialist who advocates drastic changes in the sphere of man's consciousness should not restrict his action to abstract ideological preaching. What is vitally important there is to create objective conditions precluding the emergence of religious illusions; all work toward this end "must

[1] V. I. Lenin, "The Attitude of the Workers' Party to Religion", *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, p. 404.
[2] Ibid., p. 403.
[3] Ibid.

be linked up with the concrete practice of the class movement, which aims at eliminating the social roots of religion".[1]

The work to restructure public life and eliminate the economic basis and political institutions of exploiter society directly affects the interests of the proletariat and all the working classes irrespective of their philosophical, religious and other views. Therefore, Marxism-Leninism invariably champions closer unity and class cooperation of the widest sections of the working people, both atheists and believers, on the basis of common vital earthly interests.

History has shown that the impact of the people on objective conditions of life, the social significance of their labor activity and the effect of the class struggle on the course of history are subject to quantitative and qualitative change. Marxist-Leninist theory has established the decisive role of the masses in social development and revealed that a steady increase of this role in the historical process is a general sociological regularity. Marx wrote: "Together with the thoroughness of the historical action, the size of the mass whose action it is will therefore increase".[2] Lenin said that this idea was "one of the profoundest and most important"[3] in Marxism; in different contexts, he more than once analyzed the growing role of the masses in social development, especially at the time when the power of the working class was being established and during the building of socialism.

Any attempt to artificially restrict the joint action of the working classes aimed at realizing their basic interests only because they still happen to remain under the influence of illusory ideological views hampers social development and the solution of practical tasks set by the course of history.

Among the more important theoretical and political problems of the day is establishing and strengthening the popular

[1] Ibid., p. 405.

[2] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "The Holy Family", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works,* Vol. 4, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975, p. 82.

[3] V. I. Lenin, "The Heritage We Renounce", *Collected Works,* Vol. 2, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 524.

anti-imperialist movement. Recent Marxist research has concentrated on scientifically studying contemporary social development, the position, tendencies and moods of the various social forces, organizations and groups of the population opposing imperialism, and of finding ways to use their growing political vigour. Experience has revealed the truth of the Communists' thesis stating that only cooperation among anti-imperialist elements can curb the aggressive nature of imperialism and secure favorable conditions for accelerated social progress.

Ensuring the unity ot the working class and its alliance with the non-proletarian sections of the working people, above all the peasantry, and with all democratically-minded social elements implies cooperation with left-wing, democratic forces, including those which form part of confessional organizations.

Defining the guidelines for relations with these groups of the population, the Communist parties base themselves on Lenin's idea on the need to strictly adhere to ideological principles while showing maximum flexibility in the work to organize joint action and form political unions. The alliance should be attained not at the expense of ideological "concessions" but on the basis of objective community of interests and a realistic assessment of development trends. Neither sectarian isolation nor opportunistic lack of discrimination should be tolerated.

Certain religious circles have recently voiced an opinion that Communist parties "should draw an official dividing line between communism and atheism".[1] This separation of communism from dialectical-materialist views is supposed to facilitate a dialogue between Communists and believers, while otherwise, philosophical differences will allegedly make common action impossible.

Similar theories are to be found among advocates of revisionism in a number of West European countries. At the colloquium Christian Values and Marxist Critique held in Lyons in the winter of 1980, Jean Ellenstein made an attempt to detract from Marx's ideas on the essence of religion, declaring them valid only for Germany of the 1840s. He also tried to

[1] *La Croix,* 13 September 1977.

"prove" that scientific and social progress does not reduce the need for the transcendental.[1] Other reports read at the colloquium also advocated the idea that only by abandoning philosophical materialism will Communists be able to enter into sincere cooperation with believers.

With reference to this type of statement, one can only say that, first, Marxists have never made practical cooperation between believers and non-believers conditional on the choice of a definite world outlook. Differences in this sphere cannot be an obstacle to joint social and political action. This holds true for both the period of revolutionary struggle and that of the building of socialism. The new society is built not against the resistance of believers but with their cooperation, and religious differences do not preclude respect for each person's convictions.

Second, in establishing a dialogue and cooperation with the religious population, Marxists-Leninists need not change their dialectical-materialist outlook or disguise it.

Guy Besse, a French Marxist, wrote with complete justice that "it is our materialism that feeds our belief, which we share with our partners, that the dialogue is not simply an intellectual game or a smoke screen. And, although some people may consider this paradoxical, we begin a dialogue with Christians not contrary to our philosophy but in full accord with materialist dialectics... Our revolutionary striving to change the world stems not from dreams but from objectively cognizing its laws; the world can be changed only through the joint effort of those who have reason to strive for the better."[2]

Developing this thought, Guy Besse wrote in one of his other essays: "Thus it is not by renouncing their dialectical-materialist philosophy that the Communists will create the most favorable climate for a dialogue with the Christians, or provide the greatest opportunity of uniting, on a broad basis, the progressive forces against monopoly power. The Marxist-Leninist concept of the alliance of all working people having

[1] *Le Monde,* 12 February 1980.
[2] *La nouvelle critique,* No,1, 1967, p. 34.

common interests irrespective of ideological differences is entirely based on historical materialism."[1]

Several circumstances, especially when dealing with antagonistic societies, must be reckoned with if Lenin's ideas about the joint effort of all working people irrespective of their religious convictions are to be realized. The traditional resistance of religion and the Church to historical progress and scientific knowledge, attempts undertaken together with historically doomed classes to stop social development—all this testifies to the conservative social function of religious ideology. It is therefore imperative to eradicate the distorted religious world outlook, to emancipate the consciousness of the people from age-old illusions and to help them adopt a scientific outlook. This is the most effective way of setting them free from the political influence of clerical circles. But the shedding of religious beliefs is a long process which can advance only under certain objective and subjective conditions, specifically, the participation of believers in the transformation of the world. It is also important that, at present, an increasing number of religious people are refusing to treat their faith as an obligation to be humble and retire from real life: they are taking an active part in the common struggle for social justice and no longer agree to help carry out policies of reactionary, conservative circles. As a result, the social base of the anti-capitalist and general democratic movement has substantially expanded, among other things through the influx of believers and a number of confessional organizations. In order to form the correct attitude toward religious organizations and mass movements conducted under religious banners, one must be aware of this contradiction between the objectively progressive nature of actions taken by some left-wing groups within the mass confessional movement and its religious form and analyze the significance and function of this movement with due regard for concrete historical circumstances.

Marxist-Leninist parties operating in capitalist countries have always set themselves the goal of organizing multi-faceted

[1] *World Marxist Review,* No. 12, 1971, p. 81.

cooperation with the majority of believers in order to jointly defend the people's interests, democracy and social progress, fight monopolies, the threat of nuclear war, fascism and racism. Lenin wrote in this connection: "... the creation of a paradise on earth is more important to us than unity of proletarian opinion on paradise in heaven".[1] The need for such cooperation was repeatedly emphasized by national and international Communist forums, including the International Conference in Moscow (1969), the Conference of the Communist Parties of Latin America and the Caribbean (1975), the Berlin Conference of European Communist and Worker's Parties (1976), and the Paris Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties of Europe for Peace and Disarmament (1980).

Communist parties consider it extremely important to organize joint action with the religious segments of the working classes in the developing countries. The meeting of representatives of Communist and workers' parties of Egypt, Iraq, Jordan Lebanon, Morocco, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia and other Arab countries held in April-May 1981 stated specifically that a large section of the public, including political movements using Islamic slogans, are getting involved in the struggle against imperialism, dictatorship, social oppression and corruption and for safeguarding national independence. This is not a new phenomenon; patriotically-minded religious leaders have contributed to this campaign in the past. The Communist and workers' parties of Arab countries seek to unite and coordinate their efforts with the efforts of such movements for the sake of attaining common objectives. At the same time, the statement read, the parties deemed it necessary to warn that imperialists and their allies are seeking to use reactionary religious circles and movements to undermine national unity, disseminate anti-communist ideas, sow hostility toward social progress, and fan religious enmity. These are the objectives pursued, for instance, by the so-called "Moslem brothers".

Large numbers of believers, who together with all working

[1] V. I. Lenin, "Socialism and Religion", *Collected Works,* Vol. 10, Moscow, 1978, p. 87.

people have fallen victim to capitalist exploitation, have been obliged to fall back on means of class defence to protect their vital interests. Unity and cooperation of the working people irrespective of their world outlook, are also promoted by the activities of left-wing radical religious leaders who advocate a dialogue and cooperation with Communists on social and political issues, including within the trade-union movement, during elections, etc. They believe that joint effort by Marxists and believers of all denominations should go into building a society of free and equal people. Some have even declared quite openly that believers should be given an idea of Marxists' views on social justice and especially of their purposeful practical work toward attaining justice and freedom for all. That was the spirit of the declaration signed by 192 worker-priests and made public in October 1977.[1]

Open discussions are now held in many countries between believers and Communists with a view to elaborating a common stand on concrete issues.

In October 1980, such a discussion was held in Marseilles. About 2,000 participants among whom were Christians, Moslems, Judaists and atheists, all agreed that coordinated action has assumed unprecedented importance. Data and arguments were cited which showed that people are alienated not by the presence or absence of religious faith but by class antagonisms bred by social relations. Hence the conclusion stressing the community of vital social interests and the need for joint class and trade-union action, regardless of philosophical differences.

Research has shown that the religious group of the population is coming to realize with increasing clarity that Communists are the staunchest champions of social justice. In France, 58 per cent of believers consider it possible to be both a Communist and a Catholic.[2]

The same purpose—to better understand each other and work out a common stand on practical issues—is pursued by joint publications of Communists and church officials and by theolog-

[1] *La Croix*, 14 November 1977.
[2] *L'Humanité*, 25 October 1980.

ical works on these subjects. A noteworthy collection *Christliche Markierungen* (The Milestones of Christianity) has been published in Vienna. One of the articles gives an account of the practices of left-wing religious circles in West Germany (which are not yet very numerous). The author of the article states that they consider studying the theory of Marx and Engels as a matter of course, that they have borrowed a great deal of valuable material and information from the theory of scientific socialism and that they are prepared to collaborate with other progressive forces (specifically, in the campaign against neo-fascist tendencies).

A member of Austrian left-wing Catholic circles who also contributed to the collection wrote in an analysis of the correlation between Catholicism and social progress that Catholics ought to dissociate themselves from the ideology of feudal and bourgeois society and revise their attitude to private property, renouncing it as an "essential value". The author believes that in elaborating a new moral, economic and social alternative, "certain values of Marxism" should be adopted. Stating his appreciation of the policies of Communist parties directed toward a closer union with democratic religious circles, the author concludes that Catholics should not isolate themselves in the struggle for specifically Christian progress but should join their efforts with those of others following the path of progress.

The growing convergence of the outlooks of believers and Communists rests not only on their equally negative attitude to the capitalist economic system but also on the increasing awareness of the need for establishing socialist principles of coexistence, and for common action to protect what has been gained by the liberation movement.

Such a situation has recently evolved in Nicaragua. An official statement made public in early 1981 by the Sandinista National Liberation Front leadership pointed out that religious issues were being misused by the Front's enemies who were spreading rumours concerning the likelihood of reprisals against believers and ministers of religion after the victory of the revolution.

The statement noted that for years believers belonging to the Protestant and the Catholic churches, including clergymen, had taken an active part in the struggle against Somoza's terrorist dictatorship within the Front. Many sacrificed their lives for the cause. In their struggle, they were inspired and motivated by their faith. Consequently, the document stressed, it is possible to be both a believer and a consistent revolutionary.

All this encouraged the Christians' participation in the revolution not only at the stage of the struggle for power but during the building of a new society. Proof of this was granting all citizens of Nicaragua, including priests and monks, the right to sit on government and other bodies of state authority.

The Front's leadership has confirmed the inalienable right of every citizen to hold any—religious or atheistic—views and convictions, but it has also warned against using them for counter-revolutionary purposes. This warning is all the more timely and relevant since, as the statement noted, while the majority of believers vigorously support the revolution and take an active part in it, some, particularly church hierarchs, still continue to adhere to counter-revolutionary positions.

An urgent need for the unification of all democratic—secular and confessional—forces exists in Portugal, especially in the campaign to defend the gains of the revolution. The division between the forces of democracy and progress on the one hand, and fascism and reaction on the other, is easily traceable in attitudes to the campaign for agrarian reform, the present constitution and other gains of the working people after the victory of the revolution of April 25, 1974, which overthrew the fascist regime. Of some significance is the role the Church has taken concerning these issues and promoting unity of action between believers and atheists to protect the ideals, goals and achievements of the April Revolution. The Portuguese Communist Party is sparing no effort to consolidate the united democratic front of all left-wing, progressive forces. In the spring of 1981, *Militanti*, the theoretical weekly of the Portuguese Communist Party, printed a long article on the position of the

party toward the Catholic Church and the country's religious population. Catholic organizations, it wrote, have recently voiced their opinions concerning such issues as revision of the constitution, the problems of the Common Market, nuclear weapons, and peace. Two opposing stands are supported by Catholics: one reactionary and retrograde, the other, democratic and progressive. The article urged the Communists to look for ways of cooperating with Catholics and eradicating the still present sectarian moods and tendencies in order to enhance understanding and cooperation between Communists and Catholics on the basis of common interests, and step up the struggle against oppression, poverty and exploitation.

Purposeful action aimed at involving large groups of Moslems into the work to build the new society is being taken by the leadership of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. This goal was again underscored in the Fundamental Principles of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, which include respect for Islam and the national traditions and customs. "Through our policies and practices we demonstrate our respect for freedom of conscience, for the religion professed by the Moslem people of Afghanistan. The government does not interfere in religious matters and the people now have religious freedom in the true sense of the word."[1]

The principles of the new government, including those defining the attitude toward religion and the faithful Moslems, were again expounded at the first conference of theologians and the clergy held in Afghanistan. The very convocation of the conference was of considerable importance, as the working-class Moslems in the DRA were making a sizeable contribution to the struggle against imperialism and reaction and for attaining the goals set by the April Revolution which would meet the needs and interests of working-class Moslems of Afghanistan. The Conference noted that freedom of worship was fully guaranteed in the DRA.

At present, circumstances have forced many religious leaders to agree to the need for a dialogue with atheists and Commu-

[1] *World Marxist Review,* No. 9, 1980, p. 16.

nists and to actually take part in it. But, while declaring that it is important that Communists and all categories of the religious population, above all, members of the working class, as well as those ministers of religion who are sincerely prepared to work for detente, work together, it is necessary to remember that even entering into such a dialogue, a number of religious leaders in fact pursue anti-communist goals. Pope Paul VI warned the church hierarchy against supposing that the Church had really changed its stand on the "delusions spread in society and already condemned by the church, and on atheistic Marxism".

Catholic leadership has established a special secretariat on the affairs of non-believers, which has been charged, among other things, with entering into a dialogue with atheists. True, the official leadership of the Catholic Church seeks to use this forum to resist Marxism-Leninism and the rapidly advancing secularization processes among the masses, and to find ways to retain its influence and disseminate religious ideas among non-believers. This was stated in fairly clear terms in the document *Dialogue with Non-Believers* published a few years ago by the secretariat on the affairs of non-believers in Rome.

The document sets forth the official Catholic interpretation of the dialogue necessary to the Church in order to "popularize the Gospel"; to "promote a better understanding of the essence of religious values among non-believers"; to "search for rational proofs of the faith"; to "promote the perfection of the faith"; to use "the chances for expounding our positions before audiences which cannot be addressed otherwise"; to "reveal the truths of a supernatural character and their role in man's life", etc. Only experts who have had special training have been entrusted by the official Church with conducting this dialogue, and even they are obliged to apply for instructions to church authorities in each individual case and to strictly adhere to all injunctions.

The idea of a dialogue and cooperation between believers and Marxists have met with resistance both among right-wing confessional circles and bourgeois ideologists and politicians. A typical publication of the subject is *The Marxist-Christian Ideology* by Jacques Ellul, a French bourgeois sociologist,

who tries to frighten his readers with "the Marxist menace" which has found its way into Christian circles and is propelling their members toward joint political action and the struggle for the interests of the oppressed.[1]

Most church hierarchs are hoping to use the dialogue to consolidate their positions, win the masses over to their side, and wrest them away from the influence of communism by popularising an updated theological and social doctrine. Not infrequently, the Church agrees to the dialogue only on certain "terms", which require that Marxists stop criticizing religion and disseminating the scientific atheistic outlook among people and even renounce the fundamental principles of Marxist-Leninist philosophy. It appears that Marxist-Leninist parties of capitalist countries have good reason for believing that the dialogue may in fact become a new form of confrontation of ideological concepts which the episcopate has to accept at a time when abuse and vociferous anathemas seem no longer useful.[2]

A dialogue can be fruitful only if it is aimed at attaining progressive socio-political objectives capable of promoting the interests of wide sections of the population.

Resisting the attempts of clerical circles to turn the dialogue into a weapon in the struggle against communist ideology and the dialectical materialist outlook and to use it as a means of disseminating bourgeois clerical ideas among the Marxist working class movement, Marxists abroad are justified in stating that the main content of the dialogue and its vital goals should be the elaboration of practical political steps to launch joint action in the work toward solving the pressing problems of our era. Robert Steigerwald, member of the Executive of the German Communist Party, writes in his book *Marxism—Religion—the Present*: "We seek to achieve understanding between Marxists and Christians in defining the social forces which pose a threat to peace... We want to discuss our joint action in the campaign to secure peace, and to fight against imperialism, mili-

[1] J. Ellul, *L'Idéologie marxiste chrétienne,* Paris, 1979.

[2] See, for instance, R. Leroy, A. Casanova, A. Moine, *Les marxistes et l'évolution du monde catholique,* Paris, 1972, p. 51.

tarism and war on the basis of a jointly elaborated program of action."[1]

Working to promote the unity of action of different sections of the population, communist and workers' parties in capitalist countries consider believers their comrades-in-arms and are prepared to fight together with them to meet the economic demands of the working people and attain social progress, and combat the aggressive policies of imperialist bourgeoisie. In all cases, it is vitally important to take due account of the stratification processes underway in religious organizations and promote the emancipation of believers from subjugation by reactionary social forces. This policy, which is made possible by the presence of mass social movements conducted under religious banners, should take care to formulate its goals with full consideration for the prevailing historical situation. The fact is that in some cases, a religious form, e.g., the idea of combining Christianity (or Islam, Buddhism, etc.) with socialism serves to combat socialism, dissolving it in abstract religious categories. In other cases, the same idea may be used to resist anti-communism, draw the religious population into the campaign for democracy, socialism and the people's national liberation movement, and to help believers adopt socialist ideas. Advocates of this concept are sincere in their belief that religious and communist views can be "mutually complementary", and in the striving to organize joint actions of believers and Communists in order to attain progressive—general democratic and even socialist—objectives.

This serves as the ideological foundation for the increasingly effective cooperation among all sections of the working people, based on class interest. The exploitation and oppression of the individual, so characteristic of the capitalist system, make believers more open to socialist ideas. In addition religious people have a chance to see for themselves that scientific socialism does really strive for, and attain, the humanistic goal of helping man to develop all his abilities, and that it has done a great

[1] R. Steigerwald, *Marxismus—Religion—Gegenwart,* Frankfurt-on-the-Main, 1973, p. 54-55.

deal to eliminate all forms of social injustice. An increasing number of believers have come to realize that there is an urgent need to establish close cooperation with Communists; the successes scored by the theory and practice of socialism have recently begun to exert considerable influence on virtually all mass movements, including those which are religious in form.

A significant confession can be found in the book *A Dialogue in Truth* by the French clergyman Alfred Ancel, who writes that in cooperating with Communists, Christians revize their attitude to certain religious dogmas, begin to read new meaning into the main principles set forth in the Gospel and, overcoming a strictly ethical approach to social phenomena, become more receptive to ideas of social justice.[1]

Ancel writes that the very image of God becomes transformed. Losing some of its transcendental characteristics and acquiring democratic features, God is perceived by believers as a champion of the oppressed and liberator of people from all forms of exploitation.

The growing convergence of views of believers and Communists on a whole range of topical social issues undoubtedly helps create a favorable climate for further consolidating their cooperation for the sake of social progress. But this need not mean that the evolution of religious consciousness is always toward materialism, and that believers invariably become followers of the Marxist theory of social development. The very same work, *A Dialogue in Truth*, discusses different interpretations of the class struggle, declaring the Marxist version as contradicting the spirit of charity and the evangelical concept of "love for one's fellowmen". Ancel maintains that the participation of believers in the class struggle implies love for all people, including one's class antagonists, for this is supposed to render it more effective: "Love is stronger than hate, and in social conflicts, love for one's antagonist makes possible more insighted analysis of the realities and a more effective choice of means".[2]

The policy of Marxist-Leninist parties aimed at uniting the

[1] R. Steigerwald, *Op. cit.*, p. 165.
[2] Ibid., p. 165.

different sections of the working class and all working people rests on a scientific foundation and is entirely realistic, proceeding as it does from objective social and economic processes underway in social development. The present has confirmed the tendency, which was noticed by Lenin back in the late 19th century, of individual elements and classes of antagonistic societies "to strive to unite, and to unite no longer within the narrow limits of one village community, or of one district, but to unite all the members of the given class *in a whole nation* and even in different countries."[1]

Under modern conditions, unity of all working people with broad sections of republican and democratic forces is necessary for the attainment of social progress and a better future for all peoples.

Peace Action and Cooperation of All People of Goodwill

Today, when there is urgent need to deal with the global problems affecting the entire population of the planet, it has become a task of top priority to strengthen the union and collaboration of the working people, to organize cooperation between all democratic and pacifist forces, regardless of their philosophical views, including religious beliefs. This is essential for the attainment of stable peace, disarmament and detente, which cannot be established without persistent work of all peace-loving forces and organizations uniting people with different world views.

The urgent need to solve these problems stem from the fact that wars adversely affect man's vital interests not only directly, entailing human losses (death of millions of young people), material damage (destruction of productive forces and historical and cultural wealth), psychological damage (the spread of grief, pessimism, insecurity), etc. At present, anti-war action has a

[1] V. I. Lenin, "A Characterisation of Economic Romanticism", *Collected Works,* Vol. 2, pp. 213-14.

direct bearing on dealing with other global problems, for peace is an essential condition of eliminating famine and poverty, elaborating and implementing the program of rational and comprehensive use of natural resources, protection of the environment, international cooperation in the field of scientific research, utilization of scientific and technological achievements, etc.

A clearer realization that there is a deep-going organic connection between the possibility of solving these problems and consolidation of detente is promoted by the experience accumulated by mankind over the past decades, which shows that the arms race, mounting international tensions and international conflicts combine to sharply aggravate the ecological, raw materials and food problems and to preserve the backwardness of developing countries.

At present, world public considers the adverse effects of the arms race and the cold war not only from the point of view of the increased threat of a thermonuclear war, but also taking into consideration numerous other negative consequences they entail. Trampling all norms of morality and justice, the arms race swallows up enormous human and material resources sorely needed for dealing with global problems, from pollution of the environment to overcoming the social and economic backwardness of the developing world.

The solution of global problems requires the concerted effort of all peoples and countries irrespective of their social system.

The direct link between global problems and the process of detente cannot but exert considerable influence on the activities of anti-war social forces and movements both at the national and international level, and enhance their moral responsibility. Work to solve global problems constitutes an important part of the overall struggle of these forces for establishing a lasting, just and democratic peace, for disarmament, international cooperation and preservation of the achievements of world civilization.

All the people wishing to strengthen peace have common interests, and there is no doubt that their cooperation and unity are possible. Both the scope of activity and the social basis

of the peace movement have recently been expanded.

Anti-war forces include political parties, masses of workers, peasants and intellectuals, trade-union, women's and youth organizations, religious movements, movements of scientists, cultural workers, and representatives of the national bourgeoisie—in short, all those who value peace on earth and who understand that war can no longer be a means of attaining political goals.

Communists believe that, on the whole, opportunities exist for organizing cooperation of all circles interested in safeguarding peace. A strong impetus to such cooperation was given by the program of practical actions drawn up by the 1969 International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, which stressed that the main link of anti-imperialist actions was the campaign against the threat of a world thermonuclear war and for universal peace.

Communists have done a great deal to mobilize the public and achieve closer unity among peaceful forces. Communist and workers' parties of the socialist countries took an active part in preparing and holding the World Congress of Peace Forces (Moscow, 1973), the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Helsinki, 1975), the World Forum of Peace Forces (Moscow, 1977), and the European Public Forum for Disarmament and Security (Belgium, 1979). An important place among these major international conferences belongs to the World Peoples' Parliament for Peace held in Sofia in September 1980. It attracted representatives of 137 countries, members of over 300 political parties and organizations, including religious ones.

It is particularly important today that people are stepping up the campaign against the threat of war, for Washington and NATO are sparing no effort to bury detente and launch a new and extremely dangerous round of the arms race. The goal is to attain military superiority over the USSR and the socialist community, thus threatening the achievements of world civilization and all life on earth.

Leaders of religious organizations have recently been more active in advocating detente and peace among peoples, and

opposing the arms race, especially large-scale production of means of mass destruction. That was the spirit of speeches and statements recently made by Russian Orthodox, Protestant and Moslem leaders.

Beginning with the pontificate of Pope John XXIII, the Catholic Church has undertaken a number of pacifist actions. Pope Paul VI instituted a Day of Peace, which has been marked by the Church on January 1 ever since 1968.

In a message delivered in 1975, Pope Paul VI reminded his audiences about the tragedy of Hiroshima of August 6, 1945, and voiced grave concern over a number of disturbing developments throughout the world, including the arms race, which, as he put it, "is becoming excessive" evoking "well-justified anxiety", and the trade in arms, which "has been given priority in all world markets". The Pope also expressed concern over "hotbeds of armed conflict". He stated that everything obstructing peace required "constant treatment", as well as the "permanent and rational efforts of that supreme creative imagination which is known as diplomacy". However, it was the Pope's contention that the chief instrument of action remained "moral weapons". Using the Christian idea of forgiveness, he shirked the issue of the need to resist imperialist aggression believing that "peace can only be attained through peace, which is inseparable from the obligation to justice but is based on self-sacrifice, charity, forgiveness and humaneness".

The pacifist trend has been further developed by Pope John Paul II. In his January 1, 1979 message to leaders of all countries, he advocated the education of people, especially the youth, in the spirit of peace, so as to eliminate the trend towards terrorism. His message on the occasion of the Day of Peace of January 1, 1980, was entitled "Justice and Peace" and conveyed deep concern over the situation that had evolved in the world.

In the message, he also touched on the issue of the arms race, although he refrained from directly mentioning the discussion which preceded the NATO session held in Brussels and the one that began following the decision of the US leadership to force their West European partners to deploy me-

dium range missiles on their territories. The Pope stated that mankind appeared to be in a situation characterized by the tragic contradiction between the numerous and fervent protestations in favor of peace on the one hand, and the equally real and alarming escalation of the arms race, on the other.

Pope John Paul II's encyclical "On Divine Charity" (Divis in misericordia) published in December 1980 stated, in part, that considering the size of existing "nuclear arsenals", a possible armed conflict could lead to the "partial annihilation of mankind". Similar ideas were voiced during the Pope's visit to the United Nations and UNESCO and in a number of other statements.

The Vatican has recently made repeated appeals for beginning talks on disarmament and for fully and strictly implementing the Helsinki accords by all signatory states. A number of conferences were held which discussed questions of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and peaceful uses of atomic energy. The Vatican Academy of Sciences is studying the consequences of a nuclear war for the health of the present and future generations.

Speaking in Japan in February 1981, Pope John Paul II voiced his support for the cause of peace and condemned thermonuclear weapons. Addressing an audience of 25,000 in the memorial park of Hiroshima, the victim of the first nuclear bombing, the Pope said that the Roman Catholic Church will spare no effort to achieve disarmament and a ban on all nuclear arms. In another speech, also delivered in Japan, he said that to "recall Hiroshima means to hate nuclear war, to recall Hiroshima means to devote oneself to the cause of peace."

The Christian Peace Conference, which was set up in Prague in the late 1950s and unites the efforts of a growing number of progressively-minded followers of different religions, plays an active part in the peace effort. Representatives of seven denominations from 107 countries took part in the World Conference of Religious Workers for Lasting Peace, Disarmament and Just Relations among Nations held in Moscow in June 1977.

In recent years, disarmament and action against the arms race and militarism have been considered in detail by members

of the Orthodox and Protestant Churches. A number of publications have printed the results of this work. One cannot completely support some of the ideas, but what is noteworthy is the opposition of the authors to militarism, their attempt to view it in a broader social context and define the contribution which the Christian Church can make to securing universal peace.

The Islamic Conference (held in September 1980 in Tashkent), devoted to the advent of the 15th century hijra (the Moslem chronology), was a peace-loving and politically positive forum. Taking part in the Conference were Moslems from over 30 countries of Asia, Africa and Europe, as well as delegations of other churches and international and regional religious organizations.

Advancing the motto "The 15th century hijra must become a century of peace and friendship among nations", participants in the Conference discussed a wide range of problems embracing both theological subjects and questions of peaceful coexistence of states and strengthening friendship among peoples.

The Conference adopted a number of documents, including a message to all Moslems of the world urging them to pool their efforts in order to promote peace and progress. The message stated that the sworn enemy of the Moslem peoples, the cause of peace and social progress was American imperialism, which mercilessly exploited the populations and natural wealth of developing countries and was the chief obstacle to the independent development of Moslem states and the source of a formidable war threat.

The message said that US policies were directed at setting up military bases in different regions of the globe and interfering into the internal affairs of sovereign states, and that it was fraught with the threat of a nuclear war.[1]

A call for more vigorous action against the nuclear threat also sounded at the World Conference of Religious Leaders held in Tokyo in April 1981. This conference was devoted to the struggle for a complete ban on nuclear weapons and for

[1] See: *Izvestia*, 13 September 1980.

disarmament. Taking part in its work were approximately 600 representatives of religious organizations from 60 countries.

The final declaration adopted by the Conference pointed to the growing danger of a nuclear catastrophe which threatened the very existence of mankind. In light of this situation, the declaration read, it is necessary to resolutely protect the right of the peoples to live in peace on a planet which has no room for weapons of mass annihilation.[1]

A representative inter-religious world conference for the preservation and consolidation of peace took place in Moscow in May 1982. Its initiator was Pimen, the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia.

Hundreds of prominent figures in Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, and the Sikh, Shinto and Christian religions from over 90 countries voiced their concern over the mounting threat of a nuclear war and advocated the need to protect life. Its final documents, including an address to the governments of the world, urged the nuclear powers to never, not anywhere, and under no circumstances use nuclear arms, and to pursue the policy aimed at relaxing international tensions.

In the spring of 1984, the General National Dutch Council of Churches, which embraces the pricipal churches of Holland, spoke out against the deployment of cruise missiles on the country's territory under the aggressive NATO nuclear policy. This timely decision was prompted by the adverse effect on international relations of NATO's decision to deploy missiles in Europe, and belief that the deployment of medium-range cruise missiles would undermine confidence between the East and the West.

Characteristically, pacifist calls have begun to sound even from quarters which have until recently regarded the theory and practice of socialism as the chief evil in the world.

The call to immediately halt the testing, production and deployment of new nuclear weapons systems issued by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops of the USA in Chicago in early May 1983 has evoked a wide response. The Conference

[1] *Izvestia*, 26 April 1981.

exhorted its community of believers to make a conscious choice for the sake of saving mankind. Directly contradicting the stand taken by the Reagan Administration, the message stated that the threat of escalation of any conflict is so great that unleashing a war in any form would be an unacceptable moral risk. Since a nuclear war is the gravest menace ever to face mankind, it is impossible to visualize a situation which would justify a deliberate unleashing of a nuclear war no matter how restricted it may be. These ideas were also voiced in the message of the Catholic delegation of North California issued prior to its trip to the USSR in August 1984, which was supported by over 80 per cent of the Catholics in the USA.

Much the same ideas were contained in the pastoral letter of West German bishops entitled "Justice: Creator of Peace"[1] and the addresses of many other religious unions in various regions of the world.

In a special research paper which conveyed the mood of broad sections of believers taking part in the anti-war movement in West European countries, Franz Alt, a Catholic political writer sought to explain pacifist tendencies by evangelical influence, particularly the so-called Sermon on the Mount. However, the author ended with an unambiguous conclusion: "We must prevent a nuclear war, this plague of our time, and destroy atomic bombs. There is no other choice."[2]

It is getting more and more common for even the most "traditional" and conservative organizations to revize their concepts and policies in order to take at least some account of the new realities and the anti-war sentiment of the majority of believers. In the autumn of 1983, the Synod of Bishops of the Catholic Church discussed the new interpretation of one of its fundamental concepts, that of sin. The traditional idea of personal, natural sinfulness of man was substituted by the idea of a sinful society, which is fraught with social evils. The most deadly sin is war, and nuclear war in particular.

The National Council of India's Churches supports the plan

1 *Der Spiegel,* 25 April 1983.
2 F. Alt, *Frieden ist möglich. Die Politik der Bergpredigt,* Munich, 1983, p. 115.

to turn Asia into a nuclear-free zone. Important pacifist measures have been introduced by the Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace and the General African Conference of the Churches.

However, it should be remembered that the peace champions are not always unanimous in their understanding of urgent problems and the ways of dealing with them, be it the question of stopping the arms race or settling controversial international issues.

For instance, in his January 1, 1980, Day of Peace address, Pope John Paul II advocated peace and denounced war, but pointed to injustice and erroneous views of man and society as sources of war. Correspondingly, he emphasized justice and evangelical love as the main factors capable of securing peace. Needless to say, this allows the real culprits—the military-industrial complexes and the system of imperialism and reaction—to remain in the shadow.

The forces of peace are far from homogeneous. Their members support a wide range of different political positions and differ in their estimates of and approaches to key ideological and philosophical issues. But, although they may be divided on these questions, they are unanimous in their understanding of the goals of anti-war action, its highly moral essence and their own moral responsibility. Marxists respect the pacifist activity of all people, no matter what motivates them, for it is impossible to deal with the topical global problems affecting the entire population of the planet by disjointed measures. Hence the need to expand international cooperation which would involve people holding different political, philosophical and religious views and movements inspired by different principles and ideals. This conclusion is a major political and moral argument in favor of deeper cooperation of all peaceful forces, despite serious differences in their views and ideas.

Chapter V

THE HUMANISM OF SCIENTIFIC OUTLOOK AND THE DEMOCRATIC MEANS OF SHAPING IT

Apropos the Issue of the Attitude of Socialist Society to Religion and Believers

The previous chapters of this book attempted to define the place of religion in contemporary bourgeois society. Now, let us consider its role in socialist society and the process of development wherein citizens of this society depart from religion and evolve a scientific materialist outlook.

The formation of such an outlook is particularly important today, in this era of major social changes and accelerated historical development. Creative human activity, heightened by the objective laws of social development, has increased the number of people consciously participating in the making of history; at the same time, there is a significant change in the way people with a high level of self-awareness affect the objective conditions of their own lives. This general sociological law finds a qualitatively new expression in socialist society, especially at the stage of mature socialism where the steady growth of the people's creative initiative and individual political consciousness, which are being shaped under the new system, acts as a major prerequisite of success in the work of building communism.

It is important, of course, to evolve a comprehensive approach to the dialectical connection between objective conditions and subjective factors. Man will shape the traits required by the new society and rid his consciousness of all forms of ideological delusions only if the educational system rests on the firm foundation of a sound social and economic policy. But, in its turn, the success of a socio-economic policy is directly determined by the level of socialist self-awareness, ideological dedication of the people, moral and cultural development of

the individual, the broadening of man's outlook and the presence of scientific dialectical-materialist views.

It is therefore only natural that Marxism-Leninism stresses communist education of the people in order to help them develop all their abilities and potentialities—in short, at the all-round harmonious development of the individual blending a rich inner world, loyalty to high moral principles and to the ideals of socialism and communism.

The humanistic essence of a scientific dialectical-materialist outlook and its orientation toward shaping objectively realistic and, at the same time, highly moral social views and ideals implies a critical attitude to illusory ideological systems, including religion. Being merely a fantastic reflection in man's mind of external forces and phenomena, a religious view of the world in fact denigrates man, for, invariably elevating supranatural forces and demanding credence in their existence, it distracts believers from conscious activity aimed at building a better future for themselves.

The humanistic purport of Marxist-Leninist atheism and the principles defining the attitude of the socialist state toward religion and believers are subject to constant attacks and distortions. This campaign of slander has brought together all types of religious organizations as well as bourgeois authors and revisionists, and is conducted not only in the economically advanced capitalist countries but is exported to a number of newly free and developing states.

The special message "Marxism, Humanism and Christianity" issued in 1979 by the Protestant and Catholic churches of Zambia stated that a difference of principle exists between Marxism-Leninism and the practical policy in the sphere of religion and the Church in the countries of real socialism on the one hand, and humanistic ideas, on the other. Misinterpreting the views of Marx, Engels and Lenin and the practices of socialist society, the message describes them as inhuman, since in dealing with problems involving man and society they are alleged to use "methods of physical(?) sciences" totally ignoring the "world of the spirit" and restricting themselves to material issues, and to destroy all political and spiritual freedoms, es-

pecially freedom of conscience, thus ruining the very foundations of humanism.[1]

The same sort of campaign against the humane content of Marxist-Leninist outlook and socialist society at large is launched by revisionists, who eagerly spread the fabrication concocted by right-wing clericals that Lenin turned the struggle against religion into the chief task of the Communist party and the socialist state.[2]

True, Lenin did say, and not once, that the dialectical materialist and historical outlook, the foundation of the Communist parties' work, is irreconcilable to any religion. Marxism is materialism, he wrote in his work "The Attitude of the Workers' Party to Religion", and as such, it leaves no room for religion, just as there was no room for it in the materialism of the Enlightenment or Feuerbach's materialism. Lenin referred to this principle of atheism as the ABC of materialism and, consequently, Marxism.[3]

But Lenin also wrote that Marxists must be able to maintain a scientific approach to religion, to materialistically expose the source of people's religious beliefs, and to reveal the social, historical and gnoseological roots of religion. Works by Marx, Engels and Lenin contain an in-depth analysis of the essence of religion and its social role, and expound the principles of the attitude to religion and ways of combating it. Since any religion, including the most modern systems, is hostile to truth and science, plays a conservative ideological role, and obstructs the realization of the humane goal of communism—the all-round development of the individual—communist education should provide a well-substantiated criticism of religion resting on the achievements of natural and social sciences and thus help people to evolve a scientific, materialist outlook and draw them into vigorous and conscious activity.

The revolutionary, humane character of the communist out-

[1] *La Documentation catholique,* 5 October, 1980, pp. 882-90.

[2] See: E. Fischer, F. Marek, *Was Lenin wirklich sagte,* Wien, 1969, p. 170.

[3] See: V. I. Lenin, "The Attitude of the Workers' Party to Religion", *Collected Works,* Progress Publishers, Vol. 15, p. 405.

look requires that man be protected from everything that fetters his intellect, will and emotions and prevents him from gaining a deeper understanding of the objective world. This obliges Marxism-Leninism to oppose religious concepts, which underscore the limitations of human reason and distort the meaning of the activity of the individual, classes and peoples, to appeal to the working people's common sense and their noble and humane feelings, and to support and develop their conscious wish to build a new life worthy of man.

Any theological concept, even the most thoroughly modernized (Protestant modernizm, Rudolf Bultmann's "demythologization", Gabriel Vahanian's "theology of the death of God", Dietrich Bonhoeffer's new interpretation of the transcendental and the anthropological, etc.) is incompatible with the communist outlook, for the latter represents a program of personal and social behavior resting on a scientifically substantiated system of views of the world and man, and the objective laws of evolution. It is precisely these general methodological principles of the approach to life and the norms of behavior proceeding from them that give rise to the opposition between the religious, anti-scientific outlook and the communist, scientific point of view. Religious leaders are themselves aware of this contradiction.

An important feature of the ideological confrontation between Marxism-Leninism and religion is that atheistic propaganda is conducted with tact, displaying respect toward the sentiments and personalities of believers and precluding any insult to them; Marxism-Leninism fights not against believers but for them, for overcoming the illusory concepts lodged in their mentalities which hamper their harmonious development, detract from their spiritual world, and make real happiness impossible for them. To attain these humane goals is the purpose of the ideological and political work of Marxists-Leninists.

The time and effort needed to accomplish both the socialist revolution and the building of a new society, which have a direct impact on the interests of the absolute majority of the population, depend on the number of people taking part in the

work. This makes it essential to include believers as well, and this is also a condition of their spiritual emancipation and their evolving sound views of the world.

The experience of the USSR and other socialist countries has proved the soundness of the Marxist-Leninist thesis on the possibility and necessity of joint action of the working people, both believers and atheists, toward a revolutionary renewal of the old and the building of a new society, and, should the need arise, its armed defence. In the countries of the socialist community, the political solidarity of the peoples regardless of their religious views is secured by the competent policy of Marxist-Leninist parties, which is conducted in the religious sphere as well. For the first time in human history, people have true freedom of worship and the freedom to engage in anti-religious propaganda, laws are in effect which protect the civil rights of believers. In the USSR, the separation of the Chuch from the state and of school from the Church means that the state and its bodies do not interfere in the religious activities of believers and their organizations, and the latter are expected not to interfere in the affairs of the state. The Soviet state provides certain material conditions necessary for the satisfaction of the believers' religious needs. The USSR has about 20,000 religious societies representing more than 40 denominations. At their disposal, the believers have over 20,000 Russian Orthodox and Old Belief churches, mosques, Roman Catholic churches, Lutheran churches, sinagogues, and prayer houses.

At the same time, a campaign is conducted by scientific and educational bodies aimed at helping believers rid themselves of their religious delusions and adopt a scientific outlook.

Dealing with the subject of religion, the church and atheistic education in the socialist countries, it should be stressed that historical and social conditions there vary within a wide range. It is therefore necessary to analyze this subject with due account for the dialectic of the general, the specific and the unique.

In this case, the general implies the unscientific character of any religious outlook and the dogmatic and idealistic

essence of any church doctrine, no matter whether it is disseminated in capitalist, socialist or developing countries. Modernization of religion and the Church, which proceeds vigorously in bourgeois countries, is under way in socialist society, too. There religious bodies use it to strengthen the positions of the Church (which have been shaken) and its influence over people, and to spread religious views in new forms.

The specific is manifested through the new trends in the political activities and the socio-political doctrines of religious organizations operating under socialism, some other factors helping maintain religious beliefs, and the new image of the believer. This is the outcome of the advances in the building of socialism and communism, departure of a large number of people from religion, their loyalty to the new system, their broader political and cultural outlook, and stronger positions of Marxist-Leninist ideology.

The unique is the situation prevailing in one country or another, which is shaped by the national history, international affairs, the degree of the clergy's vigor, and consistency in the implementation of the Marxist-Leninist course with respect to religious (and other) issues.

Life has shown that when counter-revolutionary elements step up their action in a socialist country, enhanced activity is also displayed by extreme right-wing clergy, which is used by imperialist circles abroad. It makes no difference whether the counter-revolutionary elements operate openly, as was the case in Hungary in 1956, in the guise of "socialism with a human face" as in Czechoslovakia in 1968, or under the cover of the so-called "independent trade unions" as in Poland not so long ago.

On the whole, a certain regularity is obvious: anti-socialist actions of rigth-wing religious quarters in socialist countries get radically curtailed as socialist society consolidates, while any weakening of its positions and errors in the practical realization of socialist principles are sure to be used by right-wing religious circles.

It would be a mistake to say that the democratic principle of the separation of the Church from the state and of school

from the Church is realized to an equal degree in all socialist countries. Its very interpretation, as well as the degree of its implementation, depends on the country's history, the conditions prevailing in it at a given time, etc. For instance, in Poland opponents of socialism assisted by outside reaction promoted anarchy seeking to steer events to a counter-revolutionary course. As a threat emerged to the foundations of the socialist state, a number of church leaders, encouraged by deeply-rooted religious traditions and the presence of a large body of believers, as well as the social and economic difficulties the country was going through, tried to secure the Church powers and privileges that were far from its due. They did not stop at attempts to gain access to the mass media and the management of state affairs; the Church openly demanded that the Catholic dogma be strictly observed everywhere and attacked secular morality and materialist principles.

Religious leaders hostile to socialism joined right-wing Solidarity functionaries in vilifying the achievements of socialism in people's Poland, and demanded that the "principles of society's life be radically revized", and were particularly aggressive in their bid to abolish collective property in rural areas.

Preoccupation of the Church with the crisis situation in Poland provoked discontent even among leading Catholic quarters. In early October 1981, the newspaper *Il Giornale d'Italia* printed an article voicing the dissatisfaction of the Italian bishops with the fact that "not a single audience, not a single speech, not a single conference passes without Pope John Paul II discussing Poland or the trade-union association Solidarity".

Even now, part of the Catholic clergy in Poland has not stopped its anti-socialist campaign. The Polish press has printed a number of materials exposing the true nature of the efforts of some of the clergymen who deliver openly subversive sermons.

In the spring of 1985 *Tribuna ludu* wrote that a section of the country's Catholic clergy is engaged not in religious but in political activities trying to attack Poland's state system from

the pulpit, sowing misanthropy and advocating religious fanaticism which takes one back into the Middle Ages. What right, the newspaper inquired, have the priests blinded by prejudice to divide the Poles into "good" and "bad" ones and exhort believers to hate atheists?

Another newspaper directed public attention to the fact that not infrequently, the provocative speeches sounding from pulpits are delivered not by priests but by specially invited political activists from among the leaders of underground counter-revolutionary organizations. Does the Polish episcopate, the newspaper asked, really believe that these people are fulfilling the "mission of love for one's fellowmen"?

Responding to the slander spread in the West about the Polish authorities' campaign against the Catholic Church, *Tribuna ludu* wrote with good reason that it would be more to the point to speak about the campaign of hatred toward the socialist states launched by some of the clergymen who are using Roman Catholic churches and cathedrals as their base.

There is clearly a need for a differentiated approach to the religious situation and the social and political positions of religious leaders, as well as atheistic education as it is conducted in individual socialist countries. Below we shall review the situation in the USSR, although, of course, the principles underlying the attitude of socialist society to religion and the Church evolved by the Marxist-Leninist theory have a universal character and are applicable to other socialist countries as well.

Democratic, Scientific Means of Combating Religious Ideology

Misrepresenting the position of religion and the Church, and especially the theoretical and practical aspects of atheistic education in the new society is one of the favorite weapons used by opponents of socialism in the struggle against its ideological and political principles. This campaign was launched immediately after the October Socialist Revolution and has never slackened. The Western press "discovers" a Christian

"martyr" (usually from among persons convicted by Soviet courts for a criminal offence or anti-social actions) and states that he is being persecuted for his religious views. A case in point was the campaign launched in the mid-1980 concerning G. Yakunin, a man convicted of anti-Soviet activities. The Western press portrayed him as being persecuted for the faith and his personal convictions.[1]

Similarly, there is a persistent effort, intended mostly for developing countries, to spread slanders about reprisals against Moslems in the USSR and their deplorable subjugated state.

These fabrications are based on a false methodological premise stating that scientific socialism regards religion as its No. 1 enemy which must be destroyed. Any means, including discrimination against believers and defiling churches and objects of worship, are supposed to be used to uproot religion from the heart of the people.

However, even the slightest acquaintance with Marxism is enough to prove that these allegations have nothing in common with the real state of affairs. It is unfeasible that the dialectical materialist teaching should seek to solve the religious and ideological problem with the use of coercion and administrative measures. Suffice it to say that socialism is the first social system in the history of civilization that has succeeded in separating the issues of religion and the Church from the state, and has ruled that no one has a right to interfere into the internal affairs of religious bodies. *Anyone* can practise *any* faith or adhere to atheistic views and still retain all the rights and duties of a Soviet citizen.

At the same time, proceeding from the Marxist understanding of religion as an illusory outlook restricting the social vigor of its followers and obstructing their harmonious development, the Communist Party has organized and introduced a strictly scientific and democratic system of atheistic work. The establishment and advance of socialism does not automatically settle all ideological problems, especially those which touch on public consciousness. Helping the masses to evolve

[1] *La Croix,* 30 August and 5 September 1980.

a scientific materialist outlook is a gradual, objective and voluntary process which leaves no room for either letting things take care of themselves or anarchist leftist extremes and reliance on administrative measures. The latter are opposed by Marxist theory and warned against by the Party; their application is prohibited by Soviet law. Only patient, persistent scientific atheistic work, which is careful to spare the believers' religious sentiment and strictly observes the constitutional principle of freedom of conscience, can effectively overcome age-old illusions and prejudices and emancipate mass consciousness from religious beliefs. The supreme humanistic goal—the all-round development of the individual and man's emancipation from religious fetters—calls for consistently democratic and humane methods, which only education can provide.

Putting these principles into practice, public organizations, scientists and educators engaged in the work to help people adopt a scientific materialist outlook have made good headway. Soviet people have changed a great deal; their store of knowledge and cultural and spiritual needs have grown enormously.

The socialist way of life as a whole helps shape the communist outlook of the working people. The restructuring of social relations, the spread of literacy, education and culture, the technical re-equipment of labor, the development of cities and industrial regions, changes in the overall structure of rural life on the basis of collectivization of agriculture, direct participation of the people in dealing with the practical tasks set by the building of a new society—these are the objective factors contributing to the success of communist education.

At present, the most important item on the agenda is to help all Soviet people to evolve a scientific outlook, for the very nature of communist civilization, which is consciously created by the people's labor, requires that each member of society adheres to a scientific ideology and a scientific way of action and thinking.

This objective involves the solution of many theoretical and practical problems. The efficiency of scientific atheistic education depends to a large extent on understanding the sources of continued existence of religious beliefs in the USSR, as

well as on competent application of the methods of scientific atheistic propaganda.

The sources of the existence of religion in the USSR, the modern content of religious ideology and organization and improvement of atheistic education have recently been subjected to careful analysis. A number of works have appeared which consider their historical, social, ethical and psychological aspects.

In the past few years, some of these issues have been interpreted in the Western press in a distorted way. The reference here is not to the activities of our ideological opponents who deliberately misrepresent real socialism, including its attitude to religion and believers,[1] but the views of certain authors expounded in the leftist press.

Analyzing the religious phenomenon in the USSR, these writers suggest their own, "original" interpretation of its roots which contradicts scientific data and the practises of socialism. They see the social roots of religious sentiments in the USSR in the continued existence of money-commodity relations and commodity production under socialism. They reason thus: since Christianity with its cult of the abstract man is a specific ideological manifestation of economic alienation, produced by a commodity economy, it follows that it must continue to be a part of the socialist system for as long as commodity-money relations and the law of value stemming from them continue to exist.

The unsoundness of this point of view is shown by its concentration of the outer characteristics of individual economic categories and ignorance of their content, their place in the socialist economy, which is the opposite of that in the capitalist world. It is a well-known fact that in the socialist society the law of value operates in an entirely different way as compared to capitalism, with its preponderance of private ownership and anarchy of production; it is restricted by the shrinking of its domain (manpower, land, and industrial enterprises being excluded from commodity turnover), as well as by state planning

[1] *La Documentation catholique,* 17 February 1980, pp. 192-95.

of production and distribution; under socialism, the law of value is used to promote the development of the entire economy.

Another erroneous assumption is that social revolution and social change do not provide opportunities for overcoming alienation of labor. Marx is sometimes quoted to substantiate this view. However, it is known that Marx used the categories of economic alienation, "alienation of labor", to define the specific attitude of man toward the products of his labor, which, including man's physical and spiritual energy, stand opposed to labor as *"something alien*, as a *power independent* of the producer".[1] Subjugation of man to labor, the transformation of the object of labor into a power that is hostile to man and subjugates him is not an anthropological phenomenon, it emerges only under certain conditions, a certain organization of social production. Marx advanced the idea, which history proved correct, that on the scale of society as a whole, the process of labor becomes the process of dehumanization and self-alienation of man only in a society where private ownership of the principal means of production predominates.

We also consider it unjustifiable to regard such an obvious fact as "traces of the mastery of nature over man", which are to be found under socialism, as the foundation of permanent religious alienation.

It is quite true that socialism has not yet learned all the secrets of nature and harnessed its forces to serve man. It is also true that under certain conditions, this may contribute to the preservation of religious beliefs. But it is a fact that the world is extremely varied and inexhaustible, and that consequently, scientific cognition will always be faced with new problems. However, this does not mean that this will always provide an excuse for a religious outlook of the world. Modern science, which has penetrated into many of the secrets of the macro- and microcosm and is successfully cognizing the laws of nature and the life of society, has produced a truly materialis-

[1] Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844", in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works,* Vol. 3, 1975, p. 272.

tic picture of the world and revealed the potentialities of human reason, thus undermining the foundations of theological dogmas and religious faith. Dissemination of knowledge and a materialist, atheistic interpretation of facts and developments combined with such a decisive circumstance as radical social change have built a firm basis for gradually eradicating religion.

The actual reasons for the persistence of religious survivals in the USSR and the reasons for the stepped-up activities of religious bodies in one region or another can be ascertained only through concrete analysis of the phenomenon under consideration. Any other way, specifically, abstract reflection, can only lead (and has actually led some writers) to rather absurd conclusions. A case in point is the idea that the very presence of the state, which continues to "put the interests of the people above the interests of individual citizens who have not yet been able to evolve socialist morality" breeds religious beliefs. In contrast to a bourgeois state, the Soviet state of the whole people is not an alien force overpowering its citizens. In conformity with the people's will, it is called upon to organize the building of the material and technical base of communism and to work to further develop socialist social relations, control the measures of labor and consumption, ensure that the people's well-being is improving, protect the rights and freedoms of citizens and help them evolve communist self-awareness and consciousness. Of course, not all officials within the socialist state apparatus competently fulfil all these functions, but this is no reason to represent the very existence of the state as a source of religious alienation.

Sociological research conducted by the Institute of Ethnography of the USSR Academy of Sciences, departments of scientific atheism at Moscow and Kiev Universities, the Institute of Scientific Atheism of the Academy of Social Sciences and some other bodies has revealed the true reasons for the tenacity of religious prejudices in the USSR. It has shown, specifically, that religion generally tries to find support among the customs and traditions "bequeathed" to us by the old, exploiter system, and makes use of the difficulties which are still part of life in the Soviet Union.

To firmly establish the socialist way of life, it is necessary to ascertain the sources of religious sentiments, conduct a sustained effort to eliminate them, and carry out educational work with individual believers along with a systematic and diversified educational campaign. Predominance of the dialectical materialist outlook in socialist society does not mean that each member of society has adopted it, or that the overwhelming majority of the population has fully assimilated it. The substantial distinctions between public and individual consciousness manifest themselves, among other things, in the continued influence of religious views upon a certain part of the population. Even in the mature socialist society, religious prejudices may increase among such people when the situation is conducive to it (e.g., when the work to popularize scientific atheism slackens).

This is a matter of grave concern to society. In the first place, religious sentiments weaken people's public vigor. Besides, any version of religion feeds and consolidates, in one way or another, other vestiges of the past, including nationalism.

The evolution of national relations in the USSR, the formation of an indissoluble link between internationalist and national consciousness, is not a simple straightforward process; on the contrary, it is fraught with controversy and is developing through the struggle against manifestations of nationalism, localism and conservative forms of people's consciousness and behavior. The latter often assume the form of archaic national traditions, customs and habits, and become interwoven with religious views and feelings in the ideology and psychology of the religious segment of the population.

The connection between and mutual penetration of the national and the religious usually persist the longest in the field of traditional culture and particularly in the people's home life, which gives the clergy the opportunity to confuse the religious with the national, and represent religious rites as an integral part of national traditions. Thus religion serves to estrange the working people of different nationalities, hamper their closer union, slow down the exchange of national cultural wealth and obstruct the education of the people in the spirit of socialist internationalism.

This is another indication that the significance of scientific atheistic education should never be underestimated. Neither is there reason to hope that objective factors alone, scientific, technological and cultural progress, will suffice to eliminate religious prejudices.

A variety of factors is required to make atheistic work efficient. Among them is knowledge of the content of modern religious systems and awareness of their evolution. In the situation evolved in the last third of the 20th century, religious organizations have been obliged to update their policies, dogma and rituals with due account for the achievements of the natural sciences by shifting the emphasis to moral and psychological issues. Everyday religious consciousness, outlook, psychology and behavior of believers are also changing. This should be taken into account if atheistic work is to remain purposeful and scientifically substantiated along the principles of dialectical materialism.

For instance, the establishment and advance of the world socialist system and especially the building of a mature socialist society in the USSR are exerting a strong influence on the content of religious propaganda. Christian leaders go to a great deal of trouble to rehabilitate Christianity and represent it as an eternal ideology which has always remained close to the common people and is in no way connected with the ideology and interests of the ruling exploiter classes, specifically, the bourgeoisie. These tendencies, which are developing in the capitalist countries, too, are still more typical of the Church in the USSR and the other socialist countries.

Objecting to the ideas of Marxist authors, who have exposed the age-old connection of the Church with the ruling elite, they usually employ the following type of argument: the dogmas of Christianity are eternal and unchangeable; its revelations have existed long before the advent of capitalism and will continue to exist independently of any state system. Religious ideology has therefore never and nowhere had anything in common with the bourgeoisie.

In the meantime, it is no secret that in the various exploiter societies the official Christian ideology almost invariably promot-

ed and sanctified the interest of the ruling class. Proof of this is the religious teaching on labor, property, classes, the state, etc., which is actively propagandized by right-wing clericals in capitalist countries.

Substantial changes have occurred as far as the believers' cultural standards and political views are concerned. There is a great difference between the present-day religious population of the USSR and the believers as they were immediately after the October Revolution. While at that time religious sentiments were rooted mostly in poverty, low cultural standards and mass illiteracy, in later periods moral and psychological motives have gradually become more important. In the first years of the new state, the reactionary clergy managed to push some believers into opposing the new government and socialist change. Now, when the Soviet Union has evolved a politically and morally united society, such attempts fail to have any lasting effect. True, some anti-Soviet elements assisted by imperialist special services are even now trying to use the religious sentiment of believers in the USSR to promote their own ends.

The Liberty and Free Europe radio stations have recently increased the volume of broadcasting to Central Asia and the Transcaucasia hoping to fan pan-Islamic and anti-Soviet sentiments among Moslems. The campaign to encourage believers, especially Jews, to leave the Soviet Union has been stepped up. The actions of illegal Uniate groups aimed at encouraging extremist moods among individual members of the Catholic clergy have recently become more openly anti-Soviet. Reactionary Islamic organizations and centers of ideological subversion abroad have stepped up propaganda intended for Moslems in the USSR based on distorted representation of events in Iran and Afghanistan. Attempts have recently been made to set up within the Soviet Union religious-mystical groups of the sort that are so numerous in the West (the Church of the Prophet, White Brotherhood, Society of Krishna's Confession).

Needless to say, all of these actions pursue goals that have little in common with religion as such.

The principal trait characterizing the overwhelming majority of believers in the USSR, as well as atheists, is their sincere

support of the socialist system and loyalty to their country. Where they differ is in matters of mentality and consciousness, which for those professing to be religious, are contradictory, combining as they do incompatible elements. While holding scientific opinions on some issues, their views on others are distorted (the world, the role of man in it, the meaning of life). A great number of believers in fact ignore religious injunctions in their daily life, in their home and family, thus showing that in Soviet society religious beliefs are essentially an anachronism.

An atheistic upbringing and education should help people grasp the links between facts and phenomena and the creative role of man, his intellect, talent and energy in mastering the forces of nature and in social progress, and to understand the significance of the revolutionary transforming role of the working class and the people as a whole. This is the profoundly humanistic meaning of Lenin's precept to help people assimilate atheistic materialist views.

Speaking on the subject of atheistic propaganda, Lenin resolutely opposed a superficial approach, as well as all forms of formalistic campaigning and administrative measures. Nadezhda Krupskaya, his widow, wrote in her memoirs that Lenin more than once talked about the harmful effect of superficial and aggressive anti-religious propaganda.[1]

"...Masses should be supplied with the most varied atheist propaganda material, they should be made familiar with facts from the most diverse spheres of life, they should be approached in every possible way, so as to interest them, rouse them from their religious torpor, stir them from the most varied angles and by the most varied methods, and so forth," wrote Lenin.[2] This excerpt exposes the futility of debates which at times flare up about whether the present has removed the need for a critical analysis of the traditional religious systems requiring only a critique of the contemporary content of these systems.

Atheistic work will be effective only if the whole store of

[1] See: N. K. Krupskaya, *About Lenin. A Collection of Articles and Speeches,* Moscow, 1971, p. 57 (in Russian).

[2] V. I. Lenin, "On the Significance of Militant Materialism", *Collected Works,* Vol. 33, 1974, p. 230.

educational means and methods, the entire wealth of scientific knowledge is comprehensively used. The goal should not be to search for a panacea but to systematically and scientifically employ all means and methods available.

Consequently, it is as important as ever to critically analyze the ideas set forth in the Old and New Testament, the Koran, Talmud and their more modern versions; to convincingly prove that they are used for political purposes; to reveal the humanistic essence of a scientific outlook; to examine the psychological characteristics of contemporary believers, their moral and aesthetic requirements; to unmask the theological speculations based on the difficulties involved in scientific research; and to develop and introduce new non-religious ceremonies and traditions to satisfy the aesthetic and ethical needs of the people.

Every person going through a difficult time or suffering under personal grief and in need of moral support should be offered assistance. It is extremely important to involve believers in socially useful work and public activities and arouse their interest in culture and science. The believers' social ties should be extended not only to satisfy their need for human contacts (which are sometimes restricted to the members of the religious community) but also to strengthen their feeling of social worth and encourage optimism.

This is all the more important as clergymen in the USSR have now begun to approach each believer individually, concentrating on those who find themselves in a difficult situation or have recently sustained a personal loss. They are ready with words of compassion for the widow, the orphan and the invalid, and even offer material help to those who stand in need of it, naturally, accompanied with appeals to frequent churches or prayer houses.

Capitalizing on human misery and the desire for compassion and sympathy, which a bereaved person naturally feels, the Church draws those who have been neglected by friends and coworkers into its sphere of influence. But religion is powerless to heal emotional wounds or satisfy the need for human contacts. "Spiritual comforters" pry into the most intimate feelings of people, lull them with conciliatory phrases substituting the

natural striving for happiness and well-being with the illusory promise of otherwordly compensation and the false hope of "personal salvation".

In order to eradicate religious prejudices it is important to take an individualized and attentive approach to the varied needs of the individual, regarding all of them as equally important and legitimate.

Religious leaders display considerable perceptiveness when catering to people's spiritual, and especially psychological and emotional, needs. They have long grasped the truth that man always strives for a full, satisfying life and seeks to have his emotional and aesthetic needs met.

A good example is the practices of the Catholic Church in the USSR. The splendor that has long been a feature of Catholic rites, wide use of the arts in the decoration of the churches and in the services (architecture, painting, sculpture, organ music, solo and choir singing) have also acquired new qualities. Traditional methods have been supplemented by recent technical achievements (electric lighting, the use of microphones and loud-speakers, etc.).

Almost all Roman Catholic churches operating in the USSR are in good repair, spotlessly clean and decorated with flowers. Most of the priests celebrating the mass and delivering sermons are well versed in oratory. The magnificence, festivity and beauty attract people who hope that the Church will satisfy their emotional and aesthetic needs. As a result, church attendance grows wherever local authorities and public organizations become set in routine and everyday hassles, forgetting that man needs more than improved material conditions—he has to have a chance to spend his leisure time profitably and excitingly, to develop his abilities and talents and fulfil his inclinations. Wherever the village club is permanently locked, the young people have no access to sports and cultural facilities, book-lovers have no chance to browse among books, and chess players are unable to fight chess battles; wherever there are no concerts, festivals and other exciting and useful pastimes to fill the people's free time—this is where you will find an increase in church attendance.

Experience has shown that one of the more promising trends in atheistic education is the introduction of new, socialist traditions in the people's public and private life. This stems from the fact that customs and rites that have assumed the significance of tradition are the most tenacious aspect of the religious complex. From time immemorial, important events in the life of man have been festively celebrated. Religious organizations are trying to read religious meaning into folk traditions and customs so as to draw man into the religious net while still a child.

Socialist society has eliminated the more important causes of religious sentiments and provided favorable conditions for completely overcoming them, and that is why for many believers being religious means not so much adhering to religious dogma as participating in church ceremonies and festivals. Sometimes they are joined by non-believers, who are attracted by the festivity of the service. Not infrequently, certain religious ceremonies, including church weddings, are performed by young people at the insistence and under the influence of religious parents.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of civil ceremonies introduced in some of the regions and republics of the Soviet Union. Folk customs and festivals have been stripped of religious features, and new traditions, which are connected with important events in man's public and private life, are being established. Needless to say, these measures are in themselves insufficient to evolve a materialist outlook, but they can do a great deal to lead people away from religion.

Years of experience have borne out the importance of publicly celebrating such events as the birth of a child and the choice of the baby's name, the first day at school, joining the Young Pioneer organization and the Komsomol, the coming of age, graduation from school, marriage, milestones in one's career, and silver and gold wedding anniversaries. This work requires consideration for the kind of customs and traditions particularly widespread in the region in question, as well as the features of its principal religion. For instance, in the Latvian SSR, where Lutheranism predominates, the stress should be on introducing new traditions connected with the person's private life: it is a tradition with the Lutheran faith to hold particularly festive

celebrations of events occurring in man's private life.

Valuable experience has been gained by Latvian public organizations in holding funerals without church ritual. The grief of bereaved relatives has always been skilfully used by the Church to strengthen religious beliefs.

Widely using the old traditions of the revolutionary workers' movement (back at the time of the 1905-07 revolution, funerals of active participants in this movement were held without the services of a priest, and the graveside orations were delivered by comrades-in-arms of the deceased), Latvian public organizations have elaborated and introduced ceremonies of "civil funerals" to which singers, musicians and reciters are invited. The whole ritual is organized in a way which both emphasizes the deceased's service to society, allows his family and friends to feel the compassion and support of others and, as much as this is possible, comforts them.

The new, socialist way of life is inconceivable without its own traditions and festivals, both public and private. They should promote humanistic and noble social principles, contribute to people education in the spirit of loyalty to their country and people, help strengthen friendly and family ties between people, praise conscientious laborers, foster optimism, collectivism and the people's responsibility before society for their behavior as well as the behavior and future of their children.

Unfortunately, in a number of cases, old folk customs and traditions are overemphasized when new ceremonies are introduced. This may make them unacceptable to people who have not been born in a given locality or belong to a minority nationality, thus hampering communal life in socialist society and artificially isolating one nation from another. The stress should be laid on introducing new socialist traditions that will help bring all the Soviet peoples closer together.

Together with events such as lectures, question-and-answer sessions, talks, etc, intended for large audiences, education and propaganda workers should pay more attention to establishing and maintaining contacts with individual believers. Direct communication with believers carried out with due consideration for their intellectual, emotional and psychological traits makes

it possible to gain their confidence and affect their way of thinking. At the same time, one may obtain a fuller and better idea of their interests, needs, views, aspirations and hopes and help them surmount life's difficulties. Not infrequently, such an approach is able to gradually make the believer understand that all, even the most complicated questions that life poses, can and should be solved without resorting to religious "guidance". The scientific basis of concrete atheistic education is being supplied by sociological research, which helps ascertain the causes and motives of religious sentiments among the various groups of the population, the specific features of public consciousness, and the elements of the religious outlook which exert the strongest impact on the believers' mentality.

Sociological research conducted in a number of regions of the Soviet Union has produced a generalized portrait of the modern religious person, helped trace the formation of religious groups, determine the degree of their stability and follow the changes occurring in them in socialist society.

Research institutions have developed improved methods of investigations in the field of religion, atheism and atheistic education, making a more in-depth analysis possible and specifying a number of concepts. Among the latter is the idea of religious sentiment; without specifying the concept of "believer" and drawing dividing lines between the different groups of the religious population, a truly scientific objective study of the issues involved in religious sentiment is impossible.

An efficient analysis of these problems requires a comprehensive approach; however, sometimes only individual manifestations of religious sentiment and the growth of atheism in this country are subjected to study. In the meantime, here as elsewhere, an individual phenomenon can be fully understood only through an analysis of its complex interrelation with all the other events and processes under way in a given social environment.

The religious sentiment of one group of the population or another is affected by a variety of factors, including labour conditions, organization of leisure, the scope of social ties, features of life in a given community, its proximity to cultural centres and large cities, historical and national traditions, the

presence of groups actively disseminating religious ideas and views, and specific features of the religion predominating in the locality. The goals of atheistic education require a clear knowledge of the causes of religious sentiment.

An important place in educational work aimed at eliminating religious prejudices belongs to scientific, specifically, philosophical research. The participation of philosophers, psychologists, ethicians and specialists in atheistic work is not limited to criticizing the religious outlook as opposed to the scientific view, nor to critically analyzing theological and religious ethical concepts and their various modifications.

Marxist-Leninist philosophy is now working to explore in depth the gnoseological and psychological aspects of the religious phenomenon, the correlation between official theological doctrines and the believer's individual consciousness, and the changes in mass religious mentality. It is also analyzing the relationship between religion and other forms of public consciousness, and developing methods and means of atheistic education on the basis of concrete sociological research.

Lenin's demand that atheistic work should be provided with a scientific foundation is inseparably linked with his idea of a union with representatives of contemporary natural sciences who champion materialism and oppose "the modish philosophical wanderings into idealism and scepticism".[1] Working to put Lenin's idea into practice, many distinguished Soviet natural scientists have undertaken a dialectical-materialist interpretation of the data provided by the natural sciences, which is badly needed if pupularization of the atheistic outlook is to be effective.

It is also important because the rapid advance of natural sciences has shattered many traditional concepts, and this has made idealistic movements and schools more trendy and popular. A materialist interpretation of the achievements of natural sciences obstructs the attempts of theologists to falsify scientific data, strip scientific discoveries of their material-

[1] V. I. Lenin, "On the Significance of Militant Materialism", *Collected Works,* Vol. 33, p. 232.

ist content and explain them in a religious and idealistic way. This was what recently happened to a number of discoveries in the field of physical properties of matter, cosmology and cosmogony, the theory of "the expanding Universe", recent discoveries in the field of molecular biology and genetics, the emergence and development of cybernetics. Popularization of the achievements of the natural sciences, which are helping to paint a clearer picture of the world and promote man's mastery over nature, and are leaving no room for figments about supernatural forces, justifiably occupies a place of importance in the shaping of the people's materialist outlook.

In this context, it appears quite clear that the view of scientific atheism as merely a system of arguments aimed at negating religion, which is propagated by clerical circles, is hardly justified. Such an interpretation is too narrow and even one-sided, ignoring as it does Marx's well-known idea that atheism is not only the negation of God but also the assertion of man's existence through this negation. Scientific atheism in fact develops and popularizes a system of positive knowledge in order not only to erase religious views but also establish and consolidate an optimistic, life-asserting philosophy of existence.

The following circumstance is noteworthy. Taken in its entirety, the scientific materialist outlook as it is expounded by dialectical and historical materialism opposes any form of idealism and all illusory views. But in order to expose specific forms of idealism, which seek to capitalize on especially difficult problems of science or any cognitive activity at large, it is necessary to develop and improve specific aspects of the scientific outlook and deal with philosophical problems in the form in which they exist in a given sphere. A religious outlook is essentially a specific variety of idealistic philosophy concentrating mostly of the range of problems peculiar to it. Elimination of religion therefore implies finding scientific materialist answers to concrete problems which the Church uses to advance its own ends.

The essence of a religious outlook in fact offers a warped solution to the problem of the individual, his duties and the meaning of his existence. The other problems (including the origin of life and the structure of the Universe, man's cognitive

activity and the paths of human history) are dealt with in a manner calculated to justify and substantiate man's religious doctrine. It can be seen that this theme is still a central one judging from the proselytizing activity of the clergy and leaders of sects. Here is only one example. A sermon read a few years ago in a Baptist community in the USSR was intended to arouse the congregation's interest in the question of life's meaning, and to concentrate their attention on religious ideas. Making wide use of rhetoric and arbitrarily interpreting facts borrowed from different branches of knowledge, the preacher attempted to prove that "only a meeting with Jesus can give meaning to human life" and that "there is no loftier goal than to dedicate one's life to God". The minister also wanted to convince his audience that the sublime meaning of life on this earth was to gain happiness in the other world.

To efficiently combat such ideas it is necessary to find a positive solution to a number of general philosophical, moral and psychological problems, in order, as fully as possible, to explain the nature of man, reveal and satisfy the inner needs and aspirations of the individual, and assert the value of life on this earth as the only one granted to man.

Consider, for instance, one of the central concepts of religion—that of the immortality of the soul. Data supplied by physiology, medicine and psychology have proved convincingly enough that there is no isolated spiritual substance independent of the human body and continuing to live after man's death, and that consciousness is a property of the brain. But to uproot the religious idea of the immortal soul, it is necessary to solve another set of problems.

Proclaiming the immortality of the soul, religion to a certain extent elevates man above other creatures, which a believer cannot but find attractive. By so doing, religion caters, even if in an illusory way, to man's striving to overcome the "limitations" of his existence and his fear of death. It gives hope, no matter how groundless and illusory, for compensation of the irredeemable losses man sustains in this world and for the hardships he is forced to endure. These things are important for every believer, and it is not enough to merely wave them aside. There-

fore, scientific atheism does not restrict itself to proving man's mortality. Marxist philosophy emphasizes man's worth and even greatness, and opens up a real, not illusory opportunity for preserving all positive values accumulated throughout human history. This is attained by explaining to the believer that no matter how limited his individual talents and abilities may be, his life on earth is not insignificant, but is an important and necessary part of the life of society. Development of man's talents and skills and his service to society ensure his social immortality. History is an integrated ongoing process, and everything that serves to promote progress remains a part of it forever.

People contribute to history by serving the society they live in. Their work toward their own happiness and the happiness of future generations secures them immortality.

Relying on the data supplied by science and on materialist traditions, Marxist philosophy constructively deals with a number of other important questions. As a result, even the most "negative" and critical aspect of scientific atheism in fact assumes positive life-asserting concepts.

A significant place in research in the field of scientific atheism belongs to the study of specific characteristics of the individual and the multitude and diversity of cognitive, volitional and emotional processes which take place in man's consciousness and psyche.

It goes without saying that the socio-economic and political cohesion of socialist society determines the community of its members' interests. But, on the other hand, man's private life is full of different purely personal emotions. Each person is a sum total of many traits, interests, talents and ambitions—everything that makes him different, makes him a unique being, a personality, an individual. The person's individual spiritual life, which is unlike that of other people, is the main point of interest and concern for religion.

Philosophical research is becoming increasingly aware of the fact that the purely personal, private aspects of man's life and individual consciousness are used by the Church and religion, which make the individual the central object of religious world outlook and try to satisfy the believers' spiritual needs

and aspirations in their own manner. An effort is made to make religious dogma an element of man's nature, of his inner emotional life. Man's ordinary thoughts, feelings and efforts of volition are deformed, being directed at non-existent illusory objects. The principal religious trends try to consolidate such warped views by building up a concrete, anthropomorphous image of God, the Holy Family, etc. These images are designed to produce an impression of tangibility that will enable people to enter into some sort of relationship with them. Should they disappear, the religious idea would most probably fail to attract the masses of believers. The Soviet press once printed an article about members of a research team studying the roots of religious sentiment and beliefs in Oryol Region. One of the believers insisted that she had established communication with God and talked to Christ. She was convinced that non-believers could never experience such happiness.

Propagating the idea of the existence of holy images with which believers are supposed to establish stable everyday contacts, the clergy attempt to represent them as the only healers of spiritual wounds, sources of satisfaction of the needs and strivings of the individual and promoters of their happiness. Because of such an emotional, psychologically subtle approach, some people continue to find consolation and comfort in religion and prayer.

With due regard for this state of affairs, philosophers work to expose the unsoundness of theological theories which maintain that all mental actions and all sensations experienced by the individual are hopeless contradictions of the human soul resolvable only through religion. That the concept of the possibility of "salvation" only through true religious love is fallacious is apparent from the fact that theologians regard love for the deity as superior to love for another human being. Consequently, being otherworldly, transcendental and devoid of any real content, religious love is unable to motivate man to positive social actions.

Purposeful building of a communist society necessitates forming truly human relations in all spheres of life and creating such conditions under which each aspect of human activity will

become a source of joy, satisfy creative needs and promote the individual. A person with a scientific outlook derives sufficient incentive and strength for his development from his own life and work, not some otherworldy goals. The purpose of man's existence is fulfilled through his life; conscious work for attaining a better life helps reveal the meaning of his own existence. For a believer, this meaning is colored in mystical, unearthly hues, while for a materialist the world contains no values besides the individual's actions and creative endeavor. For a materialist, man is not only a product but the crowning achievement of nature, and thus dialectical materialism associates the whole meaning and emotional content of life with man the victor, with his creative genius, and the striving for attaining real, down-to-earth happiness.

Theoretical researchers in scientific atheism are now concentrating much of their efforts on an in-depth philosophical analysis of the individual, his inner world, the meaning of life, the goals which man sets himself, his moral responsibility for his behavior and actions, and the effect of social progress on his spiritual life. Finding positive, constructive answers to these questions, scientific atheism proves convincingly enough that advocates of religion and idealism are completely wrong when they allege that scientific atheism neglects man's inner life.

Shaking off religious bondage, man gradually gains power over himself; fulfilling his purpose, he strives to rid himself of everything inhuman, to renovate his environment so as to free it from that which tramples upon his dignity, injures his honour, and fetters his development.

The philosophical and ethical system of Marxism provides optimistic, life-asserting solutions to other delicate questions of man's inner world. Aware of life's relative brevity, man cannot help but feel the strong impact of emotions and moods, experience the controversies of human existence, and ponder on his destiny and on the nature of happiness. Philosophers emphasize these issues in their research. This refers, above all, to the question of what happiness is and how it can be attained. Part of the answer to this important question is that true happiness is strongly linked with the all-round development of

man's physical, intellectual and spiritual abilities, and that it depends directly on man's contribution to the life of society. The religious ideal demands that man remain locked in himself, concentrating all his thoughts on "saving" his soul for life after death. In contrast to this position, atheism, seeks to help man attain harmony and turn his consciousness toward the people around him and the joys of this life.

Obviously, setting man free from religious prejudices at the same time means helping him to grow as an individual and add to his spiritual wealth. The purpose of atheistic work is to fight for man and his real, tangible happiness, which is possible only when man has set himself free from religious slavery.

Religion and its followers have always devalued human life, stressing its transitory nature as compared to a mythical future life beyond the grave. True, religious figures who are now trying to update the traditional view that holds that life on earth is a time of trial and tribulation have recently conceded that even this life can be enjoyable and happy, but it still remains only a threshold to the Kingdom of Heaven. Even the modernized concept of life advocated by religion regards it as inferior to what is supposedly waiting for man after death.

Marxist philosophy helps man to gain confidence in his abilities, evolve an optimistic world outlook, become master of his own destiny and achieve an understanding of the meaning and purpose of life. It debunks the theological opinion of atheism as a "joyless" doctrine which, destroying religious "values", is unable to suggest anything to replace them.

The history of philosophy, science and art of all countries and peoples provides a wealth of material revealing the nature of the confrontation between atheistic thought and religion and the Church. The struggle of atheism against religion is the struggle of two outlooks, with the former being materialist and optimistic, and the latter, false and pessimistic.

Lenin said that the most important thing was to prompt the wish of the people to shape "an intelligent attitude towards religious questions and an intelligent criticism of religion."[1]

[1] V. I. Lenin, "On the Significance of Militant Materialism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 230.

He suggested that anti-scientific views and illusions should be attacked with the logic and passionate combat spirit displayed by enlighteners and educators of the past. Like Engels, he proposed that the militant atheistic literature of the late-18th century be translated and circulated among the common people: "The keen, vivacious and talented writings of the old eighteenth-century atheists will wittily and openly attack the prevailing clericalism and will very often prove a thousand times more suitable for arousing people from their religious torpor than the dull and dry paraphrases of Marxism, almost completely unillustrated by skillfully selected facts, which predominate in our literature and which (it is no use hiding the fact) frequently distort Marxism."[1]

Stemming from this idea are a number of consequences which are exceedingly important for modern atheistic propaganda and which will help to draw attention to a number of new problems that have arisen due to scientific, technological and social progress and changes in religious ideology.

Marxism-Leninism has always viewed criticism of religion as a general cultural matter which has for ages been rooted in the progressive social thought of all peoples. Today, too, Communists are doing a great deal to establish cooperation in this field with all materialists and rationalists, and with intellectuals abroad who oppose religion, mysticism and superstitions. Despite the inconsistency and class limitations of their views, modern champions of bourgeois humanism and free thinking more and more often side with active opponents of the capitalist system, the crisis of which they perceive very keenly indeed. As a rule they belong to that segment of the left-wing intelligentsia in capitalist countries which campaigns against imperialist reaction, resurrection of fascism and reactionary clericalism, and for freedom of conscience and democratic rights. Its members have come up with many valuable ideas in the critique of clerical concepts and religious dogma and morality.

The actions of free-thinking intellectuals in capitalist countries have shown how wrong the makers of clerical and other

[1] Ibid.

reactionary propaganda are when they state that atheism is a communist invention imposed by the authorities (sometimes even by force) wherever communist parties are in power. Atheism and free thinking emerged long before Marxism and continue to exist independently of it, but Marxism-Leninism alone has been able to supply them with a consistently scientific foundation.

Seeking to attain their chief goal—educate and shape a harmoniously developed individual by using humane and scientific methods and means, Marxists-Leninists are guided by the idea that social progress, which is ensured by the efforts of the working people, depends on their creative vigor, on how consciously they can control and direct their own development, and on their ability to predict the objective consequences of their cognitive and creative activity. In these matters, it is most important to have a scientific outlook, which is irreconcilable to any false philosophical, specifically, religious concepts hampering the conscious and active effort of the working people.

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